Speaking with Aquinas

A Conversation about Grace, Virtue, and the Eucharist

David Farina Turnbloom

Foreword by Bruce T. Morrill

VISIT…

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"Lucid, compelling, and conversational, David Farina Turnbloom's *Speaking with Aquinas* connects the sacramental theology of the *Summa Theologica* with Thomas Aquinas's soteriology and ethics. By examining the relationship between grace and the virtues, Turnbloom uncovers the presuppositions of Thomas Aquinas's treatises on the sacraments and on the Eucharist. Aquinas's 'multiple grammars' allow him to treat the paradoxical agency of both Christ and the Christian in the sacraments. As a result, in this nuanced but accessible treatment, the Holy Spirit and the Christian life of faith emerge as the center of Aquinas's sacramental theology. *Speaking with Aquinas* reveals the links between Christology, sacrament, the Eucharist, and ethics, showing how Aquinas's sacramental soteriology can still speak to readers today."

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— James F. Keenan, SJ
Boston College

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This book is dedicated to all my teachers at:

St. John's Elementary School,
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The University of St. Thomas,
Weston Jesuit School of Theology,
and
Boston College.

I am still learning to recognize how much you gave me.

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FOREWORD

Good, powerful academic theology always draws from significant pastoral experience, from some well-founded practical motivation. This is no less true for sacramental-liturgical theology than for any other theological subdiscipline. Indeed, all too often the challenges posed to the sacramental-liturgical scholar from both without and within this particular field of theology arise from modern propensities for excessively dividing theory from practice. In the post-Enlightened modern academy, Catholic and Protestant, theological faculties tended for a combination of reasons to relegate the study of sacraments and liturgy, whether on the grounds of method or content or both, either to historical-material treatment or to the pastoral realm. In the latter case, there could arise the implication of a certain intellectual inferiority inherent to the subject matter. An air of defensiveness on both "sides," i.e., systematic versus liturgical theologians, could prove palpable in such situations, which, thankfully, now seem to be on the wane. The disciplinary quest and sporadic polemics over the nature and mission of practical theology have, for all their difficulties, at least helped systematic theologians explicitly acknowledge that practical concern (practice of the faith), however implicit, underlies their scholarship. Now, with vigor and enthusiasm, young theologians are following the example of their deceased predecessors in the *ressourcement* begun more than a half century ago, reaching back beyond rationalism and idealism for critical engagement in the liturgical practice–based thought of Christian theologians of the ancient through medieval eras.

Meanwhile liturgical theology has had its own internal problems, among which a significant one has comprised often misguided, pragmatic pursuits of palpable, practical results in the pastoral field. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy's mandate that "full and active participation in liturgical celebrations by all the people [be] the aim to be considered before all else" has, to follow the formulations of my doctoral mentor Don Saliers, suffered distortion by liturgists playing to surface-level feelings rather than to depth of emotion. Isolating parts or even the entirety of liturgy, not a few liturgical theologians (across denominations and continents) have worked at creating diagnostics for determining whether full, conscious, and active participation is actually taking place. This can amount to asking of the liturgy, and thereby of the people engaged in it, what it in itself, in its ritual components—and, thus, they in their ritual performances alone—cannot yield. The liturgy in itself is not the value. The liturgy (to invoke the other celebrated line in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*) as the source and summit of the life of the faithful is. Surely, the content and form of the liturgy—reformed and renewed—matter. But this type of "liturgiology" alone is incapable of informing the deeper connection between liturgy and life essential to gospel faith. Scholarly service to the character of lives the church hopes to foster through sacramental rites requires capacious reflection on the dynamics of grace as conveyed through scripture and tradition.

Study of the monumental achievement of Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae* is invaluable for gaining not only insight into the anthropological and ecclesial characteristics of the sacraments within the entire economy of grace but also methodological strategies for pursuing such insights. Every contributor to the development of sacramental theology over the past century has reckoned in one way or another with Aquinas. That David Turnbloom has been able to achieve such a fresh, insightful reading of the *Summa* is due not only to his carefully developed, keen theological intellect but also to the generous and compassionate pastoral and personal life of faith he brings to his scholarly work. His is a clear and compelling voice among a new generation of theologians practicing their vocations with an admirable desire to eschew ideological divides in the late-modern church while nonetheless asserting solid theological propositions and religious pedagogical strategies true to the demands of living the faith in our time. I am privileged to invite readers to enter

with Turnbloom into this particular exploration of grace, virtue, and sacrament so as to better recognize what a living body of Christ is and can be like.

Bruce T. Morrill, SJ
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PREFACE

Conversion through Conversation

I want to begin by making a distinction between what this book is *about* and what this book is *for*. In order to describe what this book is about, I would speak about the relationship between liturgical rituals and the moral identity of individuals and communities. As you will see, the content of these pages is primarily an analysis of the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas and the way he understands the relationships between grace, the virtues, and the Eucharist. However, behind the examinations that fill the following pages lies my preoccupation with the method of theological discourse. Put differently, this book is *for* theological conversation.

Through conversation we exchange ourselves with one another. We give of ourselves and simultaneously receive who we are. This book is, most fundamentally, aimed at facilitating the self-exchange that occurs in conversation. Etymologically speaking, conversation implies choosing to share life with another person. We receive ourselves in conversation because language gives us the possibility of experience. Sharing a common grammar (i.e., a common way of speaking) is the possibility of approximating a common experience. As such, conversation is also about living toward a common reality with someone. *Theological* conversation, then, is one way a community lives toward God. The purpose of this book is to provide a way of speaking that aids theological conversation.

In the end, I am most concerned with the effect the following pages might have on existing conversations about Christian worship and

its relationship to the lives of Christians. Specifically, my hope is that this book will help others see the good in the positions they fear. Seeing the good in a position we dislike allows us to overcome the biases that would keep us from conversion through conversation. This book is an attempt to mitigate the biases that plague contemporary liturgical theology, thereby helping to overcome that which blocks our conversion to greater communion.

INTRODUCTION

Finding a Lost Voice

The theological importance of St. Thomas Aquinas need not be defended. However, his continued relevance as a positive resource for sacramental theology at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not as self-evident. Since the Second Vatican Council, a plurality of grammars has developed within sacramental theology. Certain Thomists have scrupulously retained a scholastic grammar, while other theologians, influenced by *Nouvelle Theologie*, have opted for grammars more heavily rooted in patristic theology. Still others have adopted grammars that take much influence from more modern sources such as phenomenology, anthropology, linguistics, and sociology. In this introduction, I simply want to point out the obvious: this plurality exists and causes a problem in need of a solution.

Broadly speaking, this book seeks to offer a grammar that helps bridge the disconnection between other grammars. In this brief introduction, I will justify such a project by pointing out that there is a problem, namely, a disconnection between certain grammars of sacramental theology. I will then argue that this problem is, if not overcome, at least mitigated by the use of a common grammar.

I. Grammars

I would like to begin by being clear about how I will use the word "grammar." Simply put, a grammar dictates the ability of its lexicon to mediate meaning. Brian D. Robinette defines a grammar as "a deep

structural tendency in expression or thought; a characteristic and coherent pattern of understanding; an identifiable and habitual mode of articulation which results in relatively consistent thematization."[1] Or, put more simply, a theological grammar is "a characteristic pattern of Christian speech."[2] I will not use the term "grammar" as strictly as some linguists might demand (e.g., I will not spend time distinguishing between syntax, morphology, phonology, etc.). *Rather, I use the term to emphasize the importance of recognizing patterns in the relationship between words.* Fidelity to an author's thought demands far more than adoption of a vocabulary; it demands scrutiny of the vocabulary's application. While individual words are used to mediate meaning, it is the grammar within which a word is used that determines the possibility and parameters of that mediation. Grammars are more than just word choice; grammars include words, the relationship between those words, and the rules that govern those relationships. To alter the relationships between words is to alter the grammar, and to alter a grammar is to alter (whether positively or negatively) its ability to mediate meaning.

Here, I will briefly highlight three points about the use of grammars. First, grammars dictate the possibility and content of thought. As George Lindbeck puts it, "There are numberless thoughts we cannot think, sentiments we cannot have, and realities we cannot perceive unless we learn to use the appropriate symbol systems."[3] In this passage, Lindbeck is speaking more broadly about cultural and linguistic forms, but his claim is easily applied to grammars as well. Adopting a vocabulary and a particular understanding of how those words relate opens the mind to the possibility of understanding. To paraphrase one of Lindbeck's illustrations, imagine that a man who is completely unfamiliar with sports is shown a video clip of a game in which a player uses a stick to hit a ball into a giant crowd of people. If the man is then asked to explain the phrase "ground rule double," he will fail because he does not have the appropriate grammar needed to understand his experience of the game. If the man is then given a

[1] Brian D. Robinette, *Grammars of Resurrection* (St. Louis, MO: Crossroad, 2009), 184.

[2] Ibid., 181.

[3] George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 34.

rule book for golf and asked to use that rule book to explain the phrase "ground rule double," he will fail again. This time, however, not only will he fail to explain "ground rule double," but it is quite likely that he will incorrectly describe the game in terms of the rule book that he has been given. So, while grammars make understanding and communication possible, grammars taken out of context invariably lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication.

The second point that I wish to highlight is the risk involved when using multiple grammars. Returning to Lindbeck, we have seen that "it is necessary to have the means for expressing an experience in order to have it, and the richer our expressive or linguistic system, the more subtle, varied, and differentiated can be our experience."[4] Put in terms of grammar, the presence and utilization of a plurality of grammars can afford the mind deeper and more nuanced understanding. For example, a human being can be described through many different grammars. Taxonomically speaking, a human is a *Homo sapien*. Chemically speaking, a human is a mass of molecules that are largely based on carbon. Theologically speaking, a human is made in the *imago Dei*. Anthropologically speaking, a human is a storytelling animal. When we adopt differing grammars, we open up the possibility for greater depth of understanding and greater breadth of communication.

The use of a particular grammar provides an epistemological framework that constitutes a subject's perspective. The use of multiple grammars can provide multiple perspectives. While there is obvious benefit in having multiple grammars, there is also risk. The more distinct two grammars are, the more difficult communication between them becomes. For example, a physicist will be able to discuss color more readily with an ophthalmologist than with a painter. The common use of a scientific grammar that understands color primarily in terms of wavelength will facilitate communication. While multiple grammars may afford deeper understanding, that does not necessarily imply a greater ability to communicate that understanding. Simply put, certain grammars are more compatible than others.

[4] Ibid., 37.

The third point is the danger implicit in absolutizing a particular grammar. To absolutize a grammar is to afford it a place of such privilege that it leads to the exclusion of other grammars, whether intentionally or accidentally. While I will return to this danger later in this introduction, for now I would like to simply point out that excluding other grammars limits the possibility of thought. Admittedly, there are times when such limitations are advisable. It is not controversial to claim that one of the main functions of doctrine is to limit the use of speech.[5] However, it should be self-evident that when treating a Mystery, the absolutizing of any grammar is detrimental. In article 2, question 1 of the *Tertia Pars*, Aquinas points out ten different perspectives from which the incarnation can be explained as being "necessary." He then ends the article by pointing out that these ten perspectives are in no way exhaustive; nor does he privilege one perspective to the detriment of any other. Aquinas understands that in dealing with Mystery, the use of language is an exercise in approximation in which careful verbosity brings advantage. What I am *not* doing in this book is retrieving a grammar to be absolutized. On the contrary, the grammar I will retrieve is always to be used in cooperation with others.

II. Scholastic Grammars

I want to be clear about what I am *not* doing when I talk about "scholastic" grammars of the sacraments. I am not trying to define a type. *Rather, I am highlighting the tendency in which a dogmatized scholastic vocabulary is given such privilege that its use is seen as prerequisite to authenticity.* Put another way, failure to explicitly use this scholastic vocabulary is to automatically invite a hermeneutic of suspicion. In order to provide a simple example of this tendency, I turn to Pope Paul VI's 1965 papal encyclical, *Mysterium Fidei*.

In this text, Paul VI focuses on the importance of language when talking about the Eucharist. Of particular note is section 24:

[5] The potential danger in this view of doctrine is the tendency to mistake lexicon for grammar. For example, saying that Jesus sinned is instantly problematic. Nevertheless, before such a statement can be deemed heretical (i.e., be excluded), the word "sinned" must be defined in terms of its relations in the grammar being used compared to the use of ἁμαρτίας in the grammar used in Heb 4:15.

> And so the rule of language which the Church has established through the long labor of centuries, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and which she has confirmed with the authority of the Councils, and which has more than once been the watchword and banner of orthodox faith, is to be religiously preserved, and no one may presume to change it at his own pleasure or under the pretext of new knowledge. Who would ever tolerate that the dogmatic formulas used by the ecumenical councils for the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation be judged as no longer appropriate for men of our times, and let others be rashly substituted for them? In the same way, it cannot be tolerated that any individual should on his own authority take something away from the formulas which were used by the Council of Trent to propose the Eucharistic Mystery for our belief. These formulas—like the others that the Church used to propose the dogmas of faith—express concepts that are not tied to a certain specific form of human culture, or to a certain level of scientific progress, or to one or another theological school. Instead they set forth what the human mind grasps of reality through necessary and universal experience and what it expresses in apt and exact words, whether it be in ordinary or more refined language. For this reason, these formulas are adapted to all men of all times and all places.[6]

Throughout the entire encyclical, there is an emphasis on a pseudo-grammar of "sacrifice" and "substance."[7] The text asserts that the Mystery of the Eucharist is most properly understood and expressed

[6] *Mysterium Fidei* 24.

[7] I use the term "pseudo-grammar" because specific terms are defended through an appeal to (what is portrayed as) their univocal use throughout Christian tradition. In other words, emphasis is placed on words and not their historically and culturally conditioned relationships to one another. This problematic tendency finds it roots in the encyclical's fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of language. The notion that formulaic language can "set forth what the human mind grasps of reality through necessary and universal experience and what it expresses in apt and exact words, whether it be in ordinary or more refined language" misunderstands language, seeing it as a tool and not mediation. For more on this misunderstanding, see Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), chap. 3.

by utilizing these grammars.[8] Any future development that might add clarity must be a development of these dogmatic *formulae*. Simply put, Paul VI moves beyond lauding a traditional grammar and its beauty to absolutizing that grammar.

Adopting this tendency, other theologians have made similar claims about the foundational role of scholastic grammars. For example, in his essay "Transubstantiation Revisited," Reinhard Hütter states:

> The *intellectus fidei*, however, relies on *received* reality—that is another way of saying *objective* reality—and this reliance is accounted for in our case, Eucharistic transubstantiation, by a most central *metaphysical* principle, a principle that antecedes and transcends culture as much as history, human subjectivity as much as the philosophy *du jour*, in short, the metaphysical principle of *substance*.[9]

For Hütter, the metaphysical concepts of substance, accident, and quantity are indespensible. This metaphysical grammar is not merely one grammar among equals, all of which can be utilized in eucharistic theology. What we see here is a radical claim about the primacy and indispensability of scholastic vocabulary. The vocabulary of scholastic metaphysical inquiry, in Hütter's view, is not so much a grammar as it is an innate aspect of the human intellect. He maintains that "metaphysical contemplation . . . remains indispensable in properly understanding the inner constitution of the reality on which the human intellect qua intellect . . . relies in its very act of understanding."[10] For Paul VI and Hütter, grammars that fail to utilize metaphysical language when discussing the Eucharist are disabled. As such, scholastic grammars are absolutized, and this absolutizatition has consequences. As Lindbeck points out, the grammars we use dictate what experiences we can have. The same is true of these scholastic grammars. When we examine the Eucharist solely through scholastic

[8] Cf. section 39 in which "real" presence is described as "presence par excellence, *because it is substantial*" (my emphasis).

[9] Reinhard Hütter, "Transubstantiation Revisited," *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life*, ed. Matthew Levering and Reinhard Hütter (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 27.

[10] Ibid.

grammars of substance, the manner in which we experience and understand the eucharistic presence of Jesus Christ will suffer the influence of these grammars.

A simple example: in his 2003 encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Pope John Paul II says that "from [the Eucharist] the Church draws her life. From this 'Living bread' she draws her nourishment."[11] Here, John Paul follows the tendency in eucharistic theology that is a consequence of absolutizing scholastic grammars of substance. In this sentence, the Eucharist, a ritual, is confused with the consecrated species. The rite is replaced by one of its parts.

In contrast, the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy famously asserted a fourfold presence of Christ in the liturgy.[12] According to this document, Jesus Christ is present in the assembly, in the proclaimation of the Scriptures, in the presiding minister, and in the consecrated bread and wine. Absolutizing the scholastic grammar of substance leads eucharistic theology to myopically focus on the substantial presence of Christ that subsists in the consecrated bread and wine. Affording such privilege to grammars of substantial presence does damage to what sacramental theologian John Baldovin has called a "many faceted jewel." The fourfold presence of Christ is replaced by a singular, circumscribable presence. When these scholastic grammars are absolutized, perspectives are marginalized and lost. In turn, there is a tendency to reduce an elaborate and historically rich sacrament to a substantial presence or a moment of consecration.

This use of scholastic grammars finds its generation in what I call a preferential option for the language of tradition. Dogmatized language should indeed be given privilege. However, if privilege is to remain a preferential option, it must always avoid absolutization. While these scholastic grammars arise from a preferential option, the option is quickly turned into an exclusive obligation. Sacramental theology then finds itself carrying an absolutized grammar rather than walking with a living tradition. I want to be clear: I am not setting scholastic grammars up as a straw man to be dismissed. On the contrary, later in this project I will forward Thomistic grammars as particularly helpful to modern sacramental theology. Rather, I am

[11] *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 7.

[12] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7.

highlighting scholastic grammars that tend to be absolutized and criticizing them *as absolutized*. When these scholastic grammars are absolutized, any contemporary sacramental theology which fails to incorporate these grammars becomes suspect.

III. Modern Grammars

If scholastic grammars cease to be options and are absolutized into obligations, then any eucharistic theology that fails to incorporate scholastic grammars falls short in its ability to express the sacrament *par excellence*. Such disabled grammars, then, open themselves up to suspicion. Anyone familiar with the theological context from which *Mysterium Fidei* emerged is aware of the eucharistic theologies to which it was responding. When Paul VI rhetorically asks "who would ever tolerate that the dogmatic formulas used by the ecumenical councils for the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation be judged as no longer appropriate for men of our times, and let others be rashly substituted for them," he has specific people in mind. In this section, I will examine three theologians and their eucharistic theologies. As with the previous section, I am not concerned with the intricacies of the eucharistic theologies mentioned. Rather, they are being mentioned to demonstrate the existent plurality in eucharistic theology that has arisen in the last century of Roman Catholic sacramental theology.

Earlier I mentioned that some modern theologians have developed grammars for eucharistic theology that are heavily rooted in patristic sources. The first of our three examples of modern grammars of the Eucharist comes from one such theologian. In 1944, the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac published a book titled *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*.[13] In this text, de Lubac bemoans the loss of an intimate connection between the sacramental body of Christ and the ecclesial body of Christ. This loss is manifested in history by the shift in use of the words *corpus mysticum* ("mystical body") and *corpus verum* ("true body"). Once used to signify Christ's presence in the Christian community, *corpus verum* gradually came to signify the presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine.

[13] Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages; Historical Survey*, trans. Gemma Simmonds (London: SCM Press, 2006).

Likewise, the words *corpus mysticum* began to be used in reference to the Christian community rather than the consecrated species. Simply put, in the early Church the "true body" of Christ was the Christian community and the "mystical body" of Christ was consecrated bread and wine. By the Middle Ages, the designations had been switched.

This *ressourcement* project laid the ground for later theologians like J. M. R. Tillard who would begin studying the relationship between the Church and the Eucharist as it was treated in patristic writing.[14] These historical projects have become the foundation for the retrieval of grammars that seek to understand the Eucharist and Christ's presence within it. For our current purposes, it is most important to note that these projects offer us grammars that are not scholastic yet claim to speak about the Eucharist and Christ's presence with validity that is at least equal to the metaphysical language of scholasticism.

Twenty-three years after de Lubac published *Corpus Mysticum* and six years after the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx published the book *Christus' Tengenwoordigheid in de Eucharistie* (later published in English as *The Eucharist*). In this work, Schillebeeckx forwards what he boldly calls "a new approach to the formulation of faith."[15] He sets out to offer a formulation of the doctrine of Christ's real presence that "will not be from the philosophy of nature, but from anthropology."[16] Like de Lubac, Schillebeeckx focuses on making the relationship between the Church and the Eucharist primary. By beginning with anthropology, Schillebeeckx moves toward an understanding of eucharistic conversion that is constructed in terms of phenomenology, meaning, and signification. While Schillebeeckx defends the need for a theory of transubstantiation,[17] his construction of a theory of transignification is carried out employing a grammar that is not scholastic yet claims to formulate the Church's faith with equal depth and precision. This turn to the anthropological is an instance of modern eucharistic theology's willingness to engage its context as a positive source. As one

[14] Cf. J. M. R.Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).

[15] Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist* (New York: Continuum Books, 1968), 87.

[16] Ibid., 93.

[17] Ibid., 150.

might expect, this willingness is a catalyst for the development of multiple grammars.

Finally, the French liturgical theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet has adopted the theory of symbolic exchange to examine eucharistic rituals.[18] Unlike Schillebeeckx, Chauvet is less conservative when it comes to retaining the need for a theory of transubstantiation. Putting Chauvet's critiques of scholasticism aside for the moment, I want to highlight the fact that Chauvet's grammars are, like those of Schillebeeckx, rooted in an honest willingness to engage the reality of eucharistic theology's modern context. Specifically, Chauvet treats the sacrament as the ritual that it is. Heavily relying on the anthropological "turn to the subject," Chauvet explores the Eucharist as a historically and culturally conditioned ritual performed by a communal subject. By first establishing a method in which the sacraments are seen as rituals that mediate the relationship between God and Christian community, Chauvet develops a grammar of symbolic exchange and Christian identity. The sacraments are examined in terms of their role in this economy of religious identity. In short, Chauvet concerns himself primarily with what the sacraments are as celebrations of the Church, as opposed to doctrines discussed by theologians.

This brief description of Chauvet's project should make it evident that there are fundamental differences between the grammars employed by Chauvet and the scholastic grammars we previously mentioned. However, it is clear that Chauvet is not simply trying to add clarity to traditional doctrinal formulae; his project is far more constructive. Likewise, his sacramental theology is not weakened by its departure from metaphysical language.

These three modern grammars of the Eucharist do not view themselves as disabled. They are forwarded as viable options for engaging the Eucharist theologically and communicating that faith. Their distance from the scholastic primacy of metaphysical inquiry is not seen as inhibitive. On the contrary, such distance is almost always a reaction to a need left unfulfilled by such metaphysical inquiry. Whether that unmet need be ecclesiological, as with de Lubac; cognitive, as with Schillebeeckx; or pastoral/ethical, as with Chauvet, modern grammars arise to effectively communicate a faith in a way that

[18] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*.

addresses that need. And so, there arises a plurality of grammars. Catholic sacramental theology finds itself in a state of extensive plurality—a state in which not everyone is comfortable.

IV. The Problem: Lacking Context

This plurality has led to the problem of a twofold disconnection. First, there is a contextual disconnection being ignored in the transplantation of certain scholastic grammars. Second, there is a disconnection between the grammars being used in Roman Catholic sacramental theology today. The latter disconnection issues from the former.

Transplanting a grammar is what happens when a grammar is retrieved from one context and inserted into another with little or no attention paid to its relationship to that new context. For example, if a theologian began using terms like "spectroscopic lines," "electron configurations," and "angular momentum quantum numbers" to talk about the consecrated bread and wine without any previous discussion of what those terms mean or how they are being applied within a theological conversation, that would be an instance of transplanting a chemistry grammar of orbitals into a theological context. The disconnection that results from transplanting a grammar is a consequence of failing to translate that grammar *for its new context*. What *Mysterium Fidei* attempts to do is transplant scholastic grammars. Denying the historically conditioned nature of metaphysical language, the encyclical tries to rehabilitate these scholastic grammars through historical theology and explanation. As Edward Schillebeeckx has said, "It is difficult to see how simply repeating the dogma word for word in our present age could do anything but impose an unnecessary and unjustified burden on our Christian faith."[19] Schillebeeckx points out that scholastic theology's use of Aristotelian metaphysics was a new way of understanding the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He does this because he goes on to offer his own new approach to eucharistic presence which takes anthropology as its point of departure.[20] The point that we must stress, however, is

[19] Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 90.
[20] Ibid., 92.

how Schillebeeckx understood the newness of these formulations of the faith. It will be beneficial to quote him at length on this issue.

> Only a generation of believers living at a later period in the development of human consciousness and therefore further removed from the Aristotelian metaphysical philosophy of nature in its medieval form—and capable at least of seeing this philosophy more clearly if they have not rejected it altogether—can be aware that this medieval mode of thought was historically conditioned and hence, in the concrete sense, a form of "wording" for what the Council of Trent was really trying to express. But, in this case, this later generation will not be able to grasp the genuine *content of faith* of the Council of Trent if they methodically set aside their own (and later) way of thinking. If we, living in the twentieth century, are to discover the genuine content of the Tridentine faith in connection with Christ's presence in the Eucharist, we must also enter intimately into this content of faith, reassessing it and making it actual and present, because we can never really grasp at it in its "pure state."[21]

Newness, for Schillebeeckx, is not radical (i.e., a complete break with tradition), but it is honest. Modern eucharistic theology cannot transplant the grammars of the past into the present and expect that they will function in the same way as they once did; we must give assent to the loss that comes with time. To make something new is to make the past "actual and present" within and for the history of the present.

When grammars are transplanted, they are radically decontextualized. Denying their need for context (i.e., claiming their universality and absolutizing that grammar) does not undo that damage. Language is of a particular historical moment. To responsibly move a grammar from one context to another can be done only through translation. Or, as Schillebeeckx has put it: "The contemporary context of our life leads us to reinterpret the world of ideas with which the dogma of transubstantiation has come down to us, precisely in order to be able to preserve in a pure form the basic meaning of the dogma and to make it capable of being freshly experienced by modern man."[22] Translation and reinterpretation are done from and for a

[21] Ibid., 62.
[22] Ibid., 90.

particular context. *Ressourcement* theologians like de Lubac do not want to transplant patristic grammars into our modern discourse. They recognize the impossibility of such a project. The defining characteristic of true *ressourcement* is maintaining the object of study as a source to be translated, as a source from which to progressively develop a meaningful theology. When a grammar is transplanted, its contextuality is denied. To deny contextuality is to claim universality. Any grammar that is universalized is absolutized. As I pointed out above, the plurality of grammars in modern eucharistic theology includes such transplanted and absolutized scholastic grammars. The decontextualized state of those grammars brings about a disconnection in communication between these scholastic grammars and other modern grammars.

Alasdair MacIntyre, in his book *After Virtue*, points out that ethical issues are often unresolved within intellectual communities when proponents of opposing sides refuse to recognize and acknowledge the simple fact that each side is employing a grammar that is incompatible with the other's grammar.[23] In short, for conversation to be meaningful and productive, a common grammar is needed. As I pointed out above, it is possible to use multiple grammars when treating a subject. It is also possible, however, to have two grammars that are mostly incompatible. Difficulties arise when dialogue partners are using grammars that do not translate easily or are incompatible. This incompatibility between scholastic grammars and other modern grammars is rooted in the lack of a shared context. Any time a grammar is absolutized, the shared context that is a precondition for communication is denied. The criticism, then, that modern grammars want to level at scholasticism cannot find (acknowledged) footing from which to begin. Likewise, there is nothing any nonscholastic grammar could say that would mitigate the suspicion earned by being a contextualized grammar.

What I want to do in this book is show that modern grammars are not disabled. They offer us a way to understand the Eucharist that is at least as robust as the language of the *Terita Pars*. Likewise, by retrieving the context of the scholastic grammars found in the *Tertia Pars*, I want to defend them from some of the modern critiques. If,

[23] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 8.

by retrieving a Thomistic grammar of grace and virtue, we can show the similarities between these disconnected grammars, then we have moved toward leveling the playing field between the two grammars. By retrieving a grammar of grace and virtue as the context for the grammars in the *Tertia Pars*, I attempt to show that those grammars are indeed contextualized grammars. If they are contextualized grammars, such recognition is a recognition of their possible translation.

V. The Solution: Finding a Lost Voice

In an article titled "Whether the Eucharist Is Necessary for Salvation?" Aquinas sums up in six words what is, for him, at the heart of the Eucharist: "Spiritual food changes man into itself."[24] For Aquinas, the sacrament of the Eucharist has as its end the human person's union with the Godhead manifested by the unity of the mystical body that is Christ's Church. While reflecting on this point may seem to be simply belaboring the obvious, it is a common tendency in eucharistic theology to allow the *means* to this end (i.e., "Real Presence") to obfuscate the true purpose of the Eucharist—unity.

The retrieval of a Thomistic grammar of grace and virtue is not an abandonment of the scholastic language dogmatized by Trent. On the contrary, this retrieval is an attempt to honestly translate the sacramental theology of Thomas without irresponsible transplantation. More and more, however, such references to Thomas are presented as an apology in which the sacramental grammar of scholasticism (e.g., accident, substance, form, matter, etc.) is reworked, not to communicate what Thomas meant, but to make that grammar meaningful to those who hear it with a modern ear.[25] Once dogmatized by Trent, this scholastic grammar of the Eucharist laid a claim on Roman Catholic theology that has primarily manifested itself in preoccupation with terms rather than with meaning. In other words, adherence to a particular grammar is given privilege above and beyond the

[24] S.T. III.73.3.ad2. Quotations from the *Summa Theologiae* are from *The Summa Theologiae of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Latin-English Edition* (Scotts Valley, CA: NovAntiqua, 2008).

[25] An excellent example of this mentality would be the twentieth-century debate between Carlo Colombo and Filipo Selvaggi. For an insightful examination of this debate and its continued significance, see P. J. Fitzpatrick, *In Breaking of Bread: The Eucharist and Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chap. 1.

success of communicating the ideas that particular grammar was created to mediate.

Are grammars important? Certainly. Can we simply disregard grammars that are so deeply traditional as to have been dogmatized? Certainly not. Nevertheless, we must always guard against any tendency to mistake the grammar for the message, the medium for the mediated. Such a tendency confuses repetition with being traditional. The only way to truly honor a grammar is to communicate, as faithfully as possible, the message it mediates; this is called translation. Translation is not only necessary; it is unavoidable. We must be honest about the fact that we can no longer hear the Latin or Greek words of doctrine in the same way they were heard by the people who wrote them. Any notion that adopting a universal language might free us from the need for translation ignores the necessary relationship between culture and language. We must recognize and affirm that, in translation, change occurs. Not only can we say that the Church does change; we must say that it can do nothing but change. Failure to change is a failure to live.[26] So, when we seek to be traditional, our first instinct should not be to look to the *Enchiridion Symbolorum* for the word bank we have been handed by our Tradition. Rather, we should look to Tradition for the truths it passes on to us through the mediation of an inculturated and contingent grammar.

Interpretation must precede translation if translation is to be accomplished honestly, because, in the end, our only choices are good translation or bad translation. All this has been to say that *the absence of a particular grammar does not mean it is has been dismissed*. On the contrary; it is very possible that an absent grammar is exerting a great amount of influence in any given work of theology. Likewise, the explicit employment of a grammar does not necessarily imply fidelity to that grammar *qua* grammar. If we insist on utilizing a grammar to the detriment of proper translation, we run the great risk of abusing and obfuscating that doctrine.

At the beginning of this introduction, I said that, broadly speaking, this book seeks to offer a grammar that helps bridge the disconnection between grammars. Speaking more specifically, this book seeks

[26] For a brief discussion of the importance of change, see Micahel Himes, *The Mystery of Faith: An Introduction to Catholicism* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messanger Press, 2004).

to retrieve a Thomistic grammar of grace and virtue that will help bridge the disconnection between scholastic grammars of eucharistic presence and modern grammars. The retrieved grammar will function to help translate the disconnected grammars in a way that allows for meaningful dialogue. I say that this retrieval is tantamount to finding a lost voice, not because the Thomistic grammars of grace and virtue have gone unnoticed and undiscussed (far from it!), but because these grammars have gone largely unnoticed and undiscussed in connection with Aquinas's treatment of the sacraments.

By constructively using the grammars of grace and virtue, I will show that Aquinas's way of addressing grace and the virtues still has much to offer contemporary sacramental theology. In short, this book provides a retrieval of a more robust Thomistic sacramental theology. By refusing to be confined to what is explicitly sacramental in the *Summa Theologiae*, I will have opened up the traditional scholastic grammar in a way that encourages other approaches to sacramental theology. This grammar both protects against narrow readings of Aquinas's sacramental theology and broadens the spectrum of issues that can and ought to be included in sacramental theology. Replacing the scholastic obsession with transubstantiation with Aquinas's obsession (i.e., charity) not only removes a stumbling block for Roman Catholic theological conversations but also can serve to mitigate a point of ecumenical division by offering a theology better equipped to engage the plurality of grammars being employed in the discussion.

CHAPTER ONE

Why the *Secunda Pars*?

Within the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas *explicitly* treats the sacraments in the *Tertia Pars*.[1] To rely solely on the eucharistic theology presented in the *Tertia Pars*, however, is to overlook the sacramental theology of the *Secunda Pars*. The first section of this chapter will provide an example of the problems that can arise if the *Tertia Pars* is isolated from the *Secunda Pars*. Louis-Marie Chauvet's critique of Aquinas's eucharistic theology is an excellent example of the danger that results from focusing too narrowly on the scholastic grammars that permeate the *Tertia Pars*. By then turning to a close reading of the sacramental theology found in the *Tertia Pars*, the remaining sections of the chapter substantiate the claim that the *Secunda Pars* is where Aquinas *implicitly* treats the sacraments insofar as it contextualizes the *Tertia Pars*. Specifically, the *Secunda Pars* offers us a teleological framework (constructed using grammars of grace and virtue) that can be used as the hermeneutical key for understanding the content of the *Tertia Pars*. By using the *Tertia Pars* to define the Eucharist as a sacrament meant to increase charity, this chapter justifies the subsequent chapters' turn to the *Secunda Pars.*

[1] S.T. III.60-90. It should be pointed out that throughout this chapter when I refer to "sacraments," unless otherwise specified, I am referring to the seven sacraments of the New Law.

I. Lamenting the Loss of a Loss[2]

The French theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet has, in more than one instance, critiqued Aquinas's treatment of the Eucharist in which, Chauvet argues, Aquinas essentially "wrings the neck of Aristotelianism" in a quest to objectify the substantial presence of Christ in the bread and wine.[3] The critiques forwarded by Chauvet point out a tendency of Aquinas's eucharistic theology in which the relationship between Christ's ecclesial body and Christ's eucharistic body is made secondary to the relationship between Christ's historical body and Christ's eucharistic body. Put simply, Chauvet laments the loss of a Eucharist of and for the Church.

1. The Deadly Dichotomy

The main critique Chauvet levels at Aquinas is that the lens through which he understands the sacrament of the Eucharist has fundamentally shifted in a way not beneficial to the Church. Namely, the Eucharist is first and foremost seen as a sacrament in which the historical body of Christ becomes substantially present. The Eucharist is fundamentally a sacrament in which the historical body of Jesus becomes substantially present in the species of bread and wine through a moment called transubstantiation. The fact that this is most often the primary way of describing the Eucharist signals a shift away from a eucharistic theology in which the Eucharist is first and foremost seen as sacrament of charity meant to bring about the unity of the Church.

To understand this critique more fully, I begin with a discussion of what Chauvet, following Henri de Lubac, calls the threefold Body of Christ.

> It was common for theological tradition to distinguish a threefold body of Christ: (1) his historical and glorious body; (2) his Eucharistic body which was called "mystical body" up to the

[2] This section is largely taken from David Farina Turnbloom, "A Defense of Aquinas' Treatment of the Eucharist," *Studia Liturgica* 43, no. 1 (2013): 93–110.

[3] Louis-Marie Chauvet, "The Broken Bread as Theological Figure of Eucharistic Presence," in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, ed. L. Boeve and L. Leijssen (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 245.

> twelfth century because it is "his body in mystery," that is to say, in sacrament; (3) his ecclesial body, growing throughout history.[4]

The term "body of Christ" was used with equal validity to describe each designation of the threefold body. For clarity's sake, I would like to mention that throughout this chapter and those that follow this threefold body is referred to by using the terms historical body, eucharistic body, and ecclesial body. In his text *Corpus Mysticum*, de Lubac points out that from the early centuries of the Christian tradition there is a fundamental relationship between the eucharistic body of Christ and the ecclesial body of Christ. He begins his text by highlighting this relationship: "In the thinking of the whole of Christian antiquity, the Eucharist and the Church are linked. . . . The Eucharist corresponds to the Church as cause to effect, as means to end, as sign to reality."[5] In other words, the ecclesial body of Christ (i.e., the Church) was an intrinsic aspect of the sacrament of the Eucharist. Or, in Chauvet's words, "For the Fathers, the ecclesial body was the 'truth' of the eucharistic body."[6] For these early theologians, it would not have been possible to speak of the Eucharist without speaking (at least implicitly) about the Church.

The problem, as Chauvet and de Lubac see it, arises in the eleventh century with Berengar of Tours. Berengar, in opposition to the rising obsession with the relationship between the historical body of Christ and the eucharistic body of Christ, began to deny the eucharistic "real" presence in order to fight the loss of focus on the ecclesial body. In other words, in order to pull everyone's eyes away from the consecrated host and return their eyes to the Church, he denied that there was anything to look at in the host. To his overreaction, Christian tradition went on to add its own; the result was what de Lubac calls the "deadly dichotomy" between Christ's ecclesial body and the eucharistic body. To correct the heresy of Berengar, theologians intensified what Berengar had been trying to correct: they not only continued to focus their attention on the relationship between the historical

[4] Ibid., 139.

[5] Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages; Historical Survey*, trans. Gemma Simmonds (London: SCM Press, 2006), 13.

[6] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 139.

body and the eucharistic body, but they also began to obfuscate the relationship between the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body in order to avoid any semblance of heresy. Using the words of de Lubac, Chauvet summarizes this shift:

> About this, Henri de Lubac says that from the end of the twelfth century on a "deadly dichotomy" between the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body became firmly rooted. At the same time symbolism became "something artificial and accessory . . . the essential bond that joined eucharistic worship to the unity of the Church disappeared." Thus, "the ultimate reality of the sacrament," that is to say, the unity of the ecclesial body, "that which formerly was its reality and its truth par excellence, is ejected from the sacrament itself." It does remain its finality; but from then on, it does not belong to its "intrinsic symbolism."[7]

The unity of the Church, then, is no longer the truth of the sacrament. For the patristic authors, the Church was the true body (*corpus verum*) given through the eucharistic body (*corpus mysticum*), and both of these were intrinsic to the sacrament. By the thirteenth century, the "truth" of the sacrament has been redefined. According to the Scholastics, the *corpus verum* is the consecrated bread and wine, while the Church is now called the *corpus mysticum*.[8] The Church, then, is excised from the sacrament itself; the true presence of Christ is now to be primarily sought, not in the lives of the members of the Church, but upon the altar and in the hands of the clergy.

As a result of this development in eucharistic understanding, what Chauvet calls an "ultra-realist" approach to understanding the Eucharist was given more and more validity. The flesh of Christ was seen as hidden "in there somewhere." It is this development that incited the theological treatises that sought to objectify the intelligibility of holding this belief, the most famous of which is Aquinas's theory of transubstantiation. While there is no need to rehearse this theory here, it must be said that while Aquinas pushed the limits of his intellectual powers in order to demonstrate the objectivity of

[7] Ibid.

[8] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 294.

Christ's "real" presence in the Eucharist, he was a far cry from the ultra-realism so prevalent at the time in which he was writing. Chauvet points out that

> the novelty [of the language of transubstantiation] consists in the fact that compared with the theology of the pre-scholastic period, the ontological expression of the presence can be understood only as outside any physicalism and any more or less gross representation. Transubstantiation thus has a meaning diametrically opposed to the one often attributed to it.[9]

This is to say that, for Aquinas, claiming that Christ is substantially present in the Eucharist does not mean that Christ is present in the way that something is present in a particular location. In fact, Aquinas explicitly denies this manner of understanding Christ's real presence. "Christ's body is not in this sacrament in the same way as a body is in a place, which by its dimensions is commensurate with a place; but in a special manner which is proper to this sacrament."[10] While one might defend Aquinas from being labeled an ultra-realist, it is harder to save him, however, from the accusation that he stresses the relationship between the historical body and the eucharistic body. In the following chapters (especially chap. 5) I take pains to illustrate that Aquinas does not ignore the relationship between the ecclesial body and the eucharistic body, but for now it must not be denied that Aquinas is guilty of focusing intently on the relationship between the historical and eucharistic bodies of Christ. His extensive treatment of transubstantiation is clearly a symptom of the "deadly dichotomy" that had developed in reaction to the good-intentioned, if imprudent, Berengar.

2. Consequences of the Deadly Dichotomy

For Chauvet, this "deadly dichotomy" is perhaps most clearly visible not in Aquinas's construction of transubstantiation but in his claim that the sacrament is completed with the consecration of the host. "The sacrament of the Eucharist is completed [*perficitur*] in the

[9] Ibid., 386.
[10] S.T. III.75.1.ad3.

very consecration of the matter, whereas the other sacraments are completed in the application of the matter for the sanctifying of the individual."[11] After the ordained minister has recited the dominical words, whose power brings about the twofold miracle of transubstantiation and the providential maintaining of the bread and wine's quantity, the sacrament is complete.[12] That is to say, in Aquinas's theology the sacrament of the Eucharist is perfect before it is received by the faithful. More so than the inordinate amount of text devoted to the metaphysics of transubstantiation, this "completion before use" is symptomatic of the fundamental shift in which the fact that Christ is present in the consecrated host becomes more important than why he is present. In other words, this shift leaves us preoccupied with a presence understood as a "being" and not as a "being-for." Or, in Aquinas's own words:

> The difference between the Eucharist and other sacraments having sensible matter is that whereas the Eucharist contains something which is sacred absolutely, namely, Christ's own body; the baptismal water contains something which is sacred in relation to something else, namely, the sanctifying power: and the same holds good of chrism and such like.[13]

Aquinas is careful to distinguish the eucharistic presence from other sacramental presence. For Aquinas, presence is "real" regardless of its destination.

Before briefly touching on how Chauvet believes eucharistic presence should be understood, I must mention the two problems he sees as resulting from the deadly dichotomy. Here, it will be beneficial to quote Chauvet at length.

> In speaking of the "full realization" (*perfectio*) of the Eucharist in the consecration of the matter, inasmuch as the latter contains "in an absolute manner" the *esse* of Christ, one runs the risk of

[11] S.T. III.73.1.ad3. See also III.80.12.ad2.

[12] Cf. S.T. III.77.1. Here we see that Aquinas invokes divine providence twice to describe the eucharistic change: first, to change the substance of the species into the substance of Christ (i.e., to cause the *sacramentum et res*) and, second, to sustain the accidental dimensive quantity of the bread and wine (i.e., to maintain the *sacramentum tantum*).

[13] S.T. III.73.1.ad3.

> minimizing two capital elements that are linked together. On the one hand, one does not take into account the human destination that is implied by the *materia* in question, the bread and the wine. On the other, one loses sight of a fundamental aspect of the mystery: the Christ of the Eucharist is the *Christus totus*; the "head" cannot be isolated from the "body," the Church which still remains completely distinct from it.[14]

Both of these "capital elements" are concerned with the *purpose* of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. In other words, Chauvet is concerned with what he sees as a presence that is meaningful strictly as presence and not as presence *for the Church*. When Aquinas says that the sacrament is completed by consecration, he removes the reason for the consecration from the sacrament. This is especially evident when he makes it clear that the only words necessary for consecration are "This is my body" and "This is the chalice of my blood."[15] The whole narrative of the eucharistic prayer in which the reason for Christ's presence is expressed becomes unnecessary. What is important is that the bread and wine are now truly the body and blood of Christ. Eucharistic presence has become a question of being (*esse*) as opposed to being-for (*adesse*).

According to Chauvet, sacramental presence (especially eucharistic presence) should be understood as a "being-for." The word "presence" denotes not simply existence but relation. In describing Aquinas's theory of eucharistic change, Chauvet points out that "[presence] is isolated then as a thing in itself, and is being thought in the sole register of 'substance.' In this way, the '*ad-*' implied by the notion itself of presence (*ad-esse*) is put in parentheses to the profit of the sole substantial *esse*."[16] This bracketing of the "*ad-*" is a glaring symptom of the deadly dichotomy. To be present is to be present *to something or someone*. Being-for someone puts the focus primarily on the "someone" for whom you are present, in turn defining your own being in terms of that relationship. Something's presence is meaningful only insofar as it is in relation. Or, in Chauvet's words:

[14] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 388.
[15] Cf. S.T. III.78.1c.
[16] Chauvet, "Broken Bread," 250.

> The relational "for" is constitutive of the presence of Christ as such. This "for" is not a simple accidental and secondary derivation of it, nor a simple extrinsic finality. This point is of course capital: the eucharistic *esse* is intrinsically an *adesse*. Consequently one can never put this *ad* between parentheses, not even during the analysis of the how of the presence.[17]

When Aquinas distinguishes the Eucharist from the other sacraments in that it is completed after consecration, he has put the "*ad-*" in parentheses, leaving an *esse* without intention—a reality without purpose. Of course, this is not to deny that existence is a necessary aspect of presence but to insist that without the relationality of presence existence is meaningless. To illustrate the point with hyperbole: that Christ came down from heaven is insignificant; that Christ came for the salvation of the world is full of meaning. So, without those for whom Christ becomes present, the eucharistic presence of Christ is literally insignificant.

When presence is understood as a "being-for," it becomes impossible to claim that the Eucharist reaches its completion without being used by the Church. To make the ecclesial body of Christ extrinsic to the Eucharist is to rob the sacrament of its meaning. It is like an unwrapped gift. Or, to use the language of Chauvet, to remove the "being-for" from the eucharistic presence is a symptom of our "necrotic tendency" (*processus de nécrose*) to try (in vain) to capture and isolate the Living Christ.[18] That is to say: without an intrinsic relationship between the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body the eucharistic body is lifeless.

To conclude this section, we return to its title. The critiques we have just rehearsed can be summarized as lamentations of the loss of a loss. In other words, the deadly dichotomy can be seen as the result of an obsession with possession. Eucharistic theologies that

[17] Ibid., 255. This last phrase, "not even during the analysis of the how of the presence," betrays a misunderstanding at the root of so much critique of Aquinas's eucharistic theology. In our post-enlightenment obsession with reductive analysis of mechanisms, it becomes commonplace to expect foundational sacramental theology to be carried out through an explanation of the mechanism by which sacraments work. Hence, the fact that the foundational sacramental theology of signification is not materially grounding the explanation of eucharistic change is cause for concern to anyone who expects such a discussion.

[18] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 174.

focus on the substantial presence of Christ in the eucharistic species strive to overcome the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is no longer here. When we succumb to our necrotic tendency to capture the flesh of Christ on our altars, reveling in the knowledge that he is no longer absent, we have lost the blessing of his distance which is our call to be his Church. That is to say, we have lost sight of who we are as Church: the ecclesial body of Christ. When Christ's presence is allowed to be an *esse* that we use as a sacred distraction from our secular lives, we lose the *adesse* that (according to Chauvet) is given as a task to foment our spiritual lives and build the Church that is the presence of the ascended Christ. To make transubstantiation the foundation and heart of eucharistic theology is to surrender the loss on which Christianity stands. To forget that Christ is gone is to forget that we are Christ.

Chauvet shows that Aquinas's preoccupation with the grammar of substance can result in some problematic ways of describing the Eucharist. As I will now argue, however, a careful reading of the sacramental theology in the *Tertia Pars* leaves us with questions that turn us toward the *Secunda Pars*. The depth of Aquinas's sacramental theology cannot be accurately appreciated without broadening our gaze beyond the text of the *Tertia Pars*.

II. The Purpose of the *Summa Theologiae*

While Aquinas began to write the *Summa Theologiae* in Rome in the year 1265, I would argue, with Leonard E. Boyle, that the *Summa* finds its roots in Aquinas's previous experience as lector for his religious community in Orvieto.[19] From 1261 to 1265, Aquinas was charged with instructing his fellow Dominicans, readying them for their primary roles as preachers and confessors. The theological texts available to them, however, focused narrowly on practical theology, often disconnecting it from its dogmatic foundation. These well-established texts, such as Raymond of Pennafort's *Summa de Casibus*,

[19] Leonard E. Boyle, "The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas—Revisited," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephan J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 7. "[The *Summa Theologiae*] may have been begun at Santa Sabina in Rome where the *incipientes* were young students of the order, but it was Orvieto and [Thomas's] four years of practical teaching there among the *fratres communes* that had really occasioned it."

were held in high regard by Aquinas and remained a regular source for his own work. However, when given the opportunity to create a curriculum and oversee his own school in Rome (Santa Sabina), Aquinas seems to have shifted his pedagogy. Rather than maintaining the curriculum so prevalent in other Dominican schools, Aquinas was able to focus more on the relationship between dogmatic theology and ethics. As Boyle puts it, "By concentrating on God, Creation, Trinity, and other *dogmatic* or *systematic* areas of theology, he makes it clear that he was breaking away from the customary practical theology of the order."[20] Hence, when he set out to make his own contribution to the body of theological textbooks, he sought to structure the *Summa* in a way that would make the necessary relationship between dogmatic and moral theology explicit.[21] In short, Aquinas "attempted to set the regular training in practical theology in the Dominican Order on a more truly theological course."[22] By developing a dogmatic foundation for his students, Aquinas was emphasizing the intrinsic connection between ethics (i.e., questions regarding the moral quality of the human action) and systematic theology (i.e., questions regarding the dogmatically proclaimed Christian faith). Through the very structure of the *Summa*, Aquinas attests to the fact that "to study human action is . . . to study the Image of God and to operate on a theological plane. To study human action on a theological plane is to study its relation to its beginning and end, and the bridge between, Christ and the sacraments."[23]

While the *Summa* is vast in its breadth, it is a whole unified by its structure. Hence, isolating any part, question, or article of the *Summa* runs the great risk of misinterpretation. By moving to the *Secunda Pars* and examining it as the context of the *Tertia Pars*, I seek to mitigate the risk of such misinterpretation. Methodologically speaking, the role of the present chapter is to extract from the *Tertia Pars* a skeletal framework that we will enflesh in subsequent chapters, using the meat of the *Secunda Pars*. By briefly examining Aquinas's explicit

[20] Ibid., 6.

[21] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 118–20, 144–45.

[22] Boyle, "The Setting of the *Summa*," 7.

[23] Ibid.

treatment of the sacraments, I will highlight some questions that result from such an examination. These questions will be our skeletal framework. As we will see, these questions are not fully answered in the *Tertia Pars.* This lack is the justification of turning to the *Secunda Pars*.[24]

From the outset I wish to emphasize the reason that I am deliberately starting with the sacraments and not with Christology. According to Bernhard Blankenhorn, "Thomas' sacramentology must always be read through his Christology."[25] Admittedly, within the structure of the *Tertia Pars* the relationship between Christ's passion and the sacraments is paramount on both a methodological level and a conceptual level. At the methodological level, beginning with Christology (as the *Tertia Pars* does) determines the grammar within which the examination of the sacraments will occur. Hence, at the conceptual level, the *Tertia Pars* largely defines the sacraments in christological and soteriological terms. However, I am intentionally choosing not to begin with Christology, because Aquinas does not begin with Christology. The *Secunda Pars* comes before the *Tertia Pars*.[26] I do not want us to forget that Aquinas's treatment of Christ and the sacraments is preceded by an ethical context apart from which the *Tertia Pars* cannot be properly understood.

III. Signification and Causality

According to Aquinas, the sacraments are necessary for salvation because by them we are incorporated into Christ, forming one unified

[24] It should be noted that this chapter runs the risk of repeating the methodological mistake I am critiquing. I too am starting with the *Tertia Pars*. However, this chapter is not seeking to set up a foundational hermeneutic to be employed in our examination of the *Secunda Pars*. Rather, the questions we will excavate from the *Tertia Pars* in this chapter serve as skeletal framework insofar as they indicate the prior presence of a framework to be found in the *Prima Pars* and *Secunda Pars*. Simply put, highlighting these questions functions to point out that Aquinas is assuming knowledge not present in the *Tertia Pars*.

[25] Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Place of Romans 6 in Aquinas's Doctrine of Sacramental Causality: A Balance of History and Metaphysics," in *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life*, ed. Matthew Levering and Reinhard Hütter (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

[26] Admittedly, it is also true that the *Prima Pars* comes before the *Secunda Pars*. The relationship between these two will be discussed in the following chapter.

body of his members.[27] Aquinas uses two categories to describe the way the sacraments accomplish this goal: signification and causality. As signs, the sacraments function to make humankind holy by leading us to knowledge of God. Causally speaking, sacraments exist to cause our participation in the life of grace. We turn first to an examination of sacramental signification as it is treated in question 60 of the *Tertia Pars*.

Throughout the opening question of the treatise on the sacraments, signification is discussed in terms of knowledge. "Signs are given to men, to whom it is proper to discover the unknown by means of the known."[28] More specifically, Aquinas tells us that signs are called sacraments when they signify a hidden sanctity.[29] There is, however, an important distinction to be made. Sacramental signification implies sanctification. "Properly speaking, a sacrament, as considered by us now, is defined as being the sign of a holy thing so far as it makes men holy."[30] By the sacraments we do not merely know that which is holy; we are made holy by that knowledge.[31] Sanctification is not the result of a special type of signification but rather the result of that which is signified.[32] In article 3, Aquinas tells us that the sacraments signify Christ's passion (the cause of our sanctification), grace and virtues (the form of our sanctification), and eternal life (the end of our sanctification).[33] Sacraments are said to have sacramental signification because they signify (i.e., offer us knowledge of) the cause, form, and end of our sanctification. In short, we are sanctified through knowledge of the causes of our sanctification.[34]

[27] Cf. S.T. III.61.1sc.

[28] S.T. III.60.2c. See also, a. 4.

[29] S.T. III.60.1c.

[30] S.T. III.60.2c.

[31] It is crucial to note that we are not saying anything yet about what "knowledge" means. Much less have we established how Aquinas understands the relationship between knowledge and sanctification.

[32] S.T. III.60.2.ad1.

[33] S.T. III.60.3c.

[34] According to Aquinas (cf. III.49.1.ad4 and III.61.1.ad3), as a "universal cause," Christ's Passion is "applied" to individuals through the sacraments. There is an implicit, yet acute awareness of the historical nature of salvation at work in Aquinas's thought here. The historical application of the passion will be taken up later in chap. 5.2.

It is the central role of signification that leads Aquinas to place such a high importance on the words used in the sacraments. I will have cause in subsequent chapters to return to the role of language in Aquinas's system. For now, I am content to point out that, according to Aquinas, words are signs *par excellence*, capable of signification in a way that objects and gestures are not.[35] There is an "essential sense" communicated by the words of the sacraments.[36] It is this essential sense of the words, and not the uttered words themselves, that makes sacramental signification possible. The sacramental signification is said to sanctify insofar as the essential sense of the words is believed through faith. So, I can qualify my previous claim: we are sanctified through belief in the causes of our sanctification—causes that are made present and known to us through the sacraments.[37]

With this notion of sacramental signification in mind, we can begin to understand what Aquinas means by sacramental causality. In question 62, Aquinas treats the issue of sacramental causality within the context of examining grace as the principal effect of sacraments. Aquinas points out that any instance of being incorporated to Christ is the result of grace.[38] Insofar as the sacraments are ordained to such an end, Aquinas feels that he is required to say (*necesse est dicere*) that the sacraments may be said to cause grace in some way (*per aliquem modum*). In article 1, he goes on to explain this inherited language by first saying what sacramental causality is not. Sacraments are not principal efficient causes; rather, they are always (even when Christ is substantially contained in the sacrament) separated instrumental efficient causes of grace. "The instrumental cause works not by the power of its form but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent."[39] Aquinas uses the relationship between carpenter, axe, and couch as a metaphor for understanding the distinction between principal cause and instrumental cause. This metaphor functions to highlight the fact that the effect (i.e., the couch) shares a likeness to the principal cause (i.e., the carpenter's mind)

[35] S.T. III.60.6c.
[36] S.T. III.60.8c.
[37] Cf. S.T. III.60.7.ad1.
[38] S.T. III.62.1c.
[39] Ibid.

and not the likeness of the instrumental cause (i.e., the axe). Before using the instrumental cause, the carpenter has in her mind an image of what she wants to create. The resultant couch shares a likeness to the thoughts of the carpenter (assuming the carpenter is not incompetent) but it does not share a likeness to the axe.

The principal effect of the sacraments is grace, and grace "is nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature."[40] Without unpacking what is positively meant by "a participated likeness in the Divine Nature" (a task that will be given much treatment in the following chapter), here we are concerned only with saying that grace shares a likeness, not to the sacraments, but to God. So, according to Aquinas, the sacraments cause grace the same way that an axe causes a couch. Likewise, the sacraments contain grace the same way that an axe contains a couch.[41] If we are to give a Thomistic answer to the question "What causes grace?" we must first point out that the question is flawed. The proper question is, "*Who* causes grace?" After answering that more fundamental question, we are then free to inquire about the ways God has deemed it fitting to cause grace.

As we have seen, Aquinas spends most of his time qualifying the traditional claim that sacraments cause grace. God uses sacramental signs to draw us into a participation in the Divine Nature. Put differently, God uses sacraments to cause grace. To contextualize Aquinas's incredibly nuanced exposition of sacramental causality, it is helpful to recall the *Summa*'s genre. It is an introductory textbook. Much like any good teacher of beginners, Aquinas is presenting the tradition as fairly as possible. Aquinas must tell his students that sacraments cause grace, so he tells them that sacraments have no causal power by nature of their form (i.e., the misunderstanding that allows *ex opere operato* to degenerate into hermeticism), but rather they are said to have causal power insofar as by means of signification God causes us to participate in the Divine Nature. Notice what Aquinas has done here: he has taken traditional grammars of causality and constructed a sacramental theology that aligns easily with a grammar of signification and participation. By defining grace in terms of participation he situates any understanding of sacramental causality within that framework.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Cf. S.T. III.62.3.

Understanding the relationship between causality and signification is important so as to avoid misunderstanding the role of the sacraments in the sanctification of humankind. The sacraments are not shower handles that, when properly turned, cause grace to shower down upon us from on high. Rather, the sacraments all function together to bring us to faithful participation in the Divine Nature. The enumeration of the sacraments, in Aquinas's treatment, results from the varying roles each religious ritual plays in the sanctification of humankind. That is to say, each sacrament helps us live the graced life in its own specific manner according to our various needs. All seven sacraments of the New Law serve the unity of Christ's body, the Church, by signifying our sanctification in different ways. When we say that the sacraments cause grace, we must avoid imagining seven different rituals causing the same homogenous grace in seven different ways. Rather, it is crucial to remember that each sacrament has its own *res tantum*, its own grace. Remembering that causality is a function of signification, we must look to the way the sacraments bring us to belief in our sanctification. Each sacrament sanctifies by virtue of its distinct form of signification. So, rather than shower handles, sacraments are like a series of letters you receive from a distant loved one, each treating a different aspect of your relationship. In reading a letter that expresses forgiveness after having hurt your beloved, you are drawn more deeply into that relationship with a renewed sense of friendship. A love letter that poetically celebrates a shared desire for one another intensifies the love that was already present. Similarly, sacraments signify God's actions in our lives. They cause grace by bringing us into that divine life.

Any examination of the *Tertia Pars* alone, like the one above, should leave the examiner with questions about the grammar Aquinas employs. As we have seen, through signification the sacraments bring us to belief in the source of our sanctification and, in so doing, we are made to participate in the Divine Nature. Put simply, through the sacraments, we are graced. Based on this discussion of sacramental signification, we have seen that the concepts of grace, participation, and belief are essential to Thomas's treatment of the sacraments. If we want to fully understand the sacraments we must first understand the relationship between grace, participation, and belief. Based on the exposition above, it should be clear that the sacramental theology found in the *Tertia Pars* does not sufficiently develop these terms and

their relationship to one another. This is because the *Tertia Pars* is assuming knowledge. In the following chapter, then, we will focus on the relationship between grace, participation, and belief as it is treated in the *Secunda Pars*. Together these terms make up the heart of the grammar of grace that this book is seeking to retrieve from the *Secunda Pars*.

IV. Baptism and Penance: Infusing Charity

Before we move to an examination of individual sacraments, we must briefly treat Thomas's categories of "sacrament only, sacrament and reality, and reality only" (*sacramentum tantum*, *sacramentum et res*, and *res tantum*, respectively). Each sacrament can be described using these categories. Understanding the relationship between them helps us better understand the relationship between sacramental signification and grace. Simply put, the grace of a sacrament is the reality at which it aims, or its end. Thomas calls this end the *res tantum*. For example, as we will discuss further in the following section of this chapter, the purpose and *res tantum* of the Eucharist is the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ.[42] In the first article of question 73, Aquinas points out that the grace bestowed by the Eucharist is this *res tantum*.[43] Hence, eucharistic grace is identified with the unity of the Church. While each sacrament is ordained toward an end (i.e., its grace), the *sacramentum tantum* and the *sacramentum et res* of each sacrament play the vital role of signifying the sacrament's end. As I have already pointed out, grace is the result of sacramental signification. The *sacramentum tantum* and the *sacramentum et res* sanctify us by signifying the causes of our sanctification so that we might believe in that sanctification. In the Eucharist, the bread and wine (the *sacramentum tantum*) and the eucharistic body of Christ (the *sacramentum et res*) signify the Church's identity with Christ. It is important to note that, according to Aquinas, the *sacramentum tantum* and the *sacramentum et res* work *together* to cause the *res tantum* through signification.[44] This is very different from saying that the *sacramentum tantum* causes the *sacramentum et res*, which in turn causes the *res tantum*. This point is of particular importance for a proper understanding of the Eucharist.

[42] S.T. III.73.3c.
[43] S.T. III.73.1.ad3.
[44] S.T. III.84.1.ad3.

The unity of the Church is not the result of the substantial presence of Christ. It is a result of both the ritual itself and the substantial presence of Christ. In every sacrament, the *sacramentum tantum* and the *sacramentum et res* work together to sanctify us insofar as they are both signs that point beyond themselves to a particular manner of participation in Divine Life, that is, a sacramental grace. Aquinas's use of these three categories allows us to see, again, the foundational role of signification in his sacramental theology. All sacraments are ordered toward a *res tantum*, a particular grace. For Aquinas, it is by virtue of these graces that the sacraments are rightly enumerated as seven individual sacraments.

Having focused on how the sacraments are the same, the remainder of the chapter will focus on what makes the Eucharist different from the sacraments of baptism and penance. As I mentioned above, the Eucharist is ordered to nourishing the unity of the Church. While it is the main focus of this book to examine exactly how the Eucharist attains this end, the present chapter is concerned with offering a simple explanation: *the Eucharist increases charity in subjects*. By way of substantiating that claim, I would like to say what the Eucharist is not. Before I return to an examination of what it means to say that the Eucharist nourishes unity by increasing charity, I will begin by drawing the distinction between increasing charity and infusing charity. Remembering that the sacraments are distinguished by their ends, I will look at the ends of baptism and penance. By examining the relationship between charity and these two sacraments, I will highlight what the Eucharist does not do, namely, infuse charity.

In question 66, article 1, Aquinas points out that inward justification is the *res tantum* of baptism. The water and its use are the *sacramentum tantum*, and the baptismal character is the *sacramentum et res*. Together, the ritual and the baptismal character both signify the justification of the person who is baptized. Expanding on this particular grace of baptism, Aquinas cites John of Damascus who "also set down two things pertaining to the ultimate reality of the sacrament—namely, regeneration which refers to the fact that man by being baptized begins the new life of righteousness; and enlightenment, which refers especially to faith, by which man receives spiritual life."[45] So,

[45] S.T. III.66.1.ad1.

when Aquinas says that the very nature of baptism is "a regeneration unto a spiritual life" he is defining the *res tantum* of baptism.[46]

The grace of baptism is regeneration so that the baptized person "may be incorporated in Christ."[47] The relationship between justification and incorporation in Christ will be more closely treated in chapter 3. For now, I want to emphasize that justification is our spiritual regeneration into the life of Christ because through the forgiveness of sins we are "born again in Christ."[48] There is a radical newness to this spiritual life that leads Aquinas to call the sacramental grace of baptism "the grace of newness."[49] Through baptism, we are said to be justified insofar as we receive "a certain rectitude of order in [our] interior dispositions."[50] This ordered interior is accomplished through the infusion of the theological virtues.[51] The *res tantum* of baptism, then, is God's reordering of our dispositions by the infusion of faith, hope, and charity. All this is to say that the sacrament of baptism *infuses* charity where there previously was no charity.

Once we have charity, we can lose it completely and in an instant. Aquinas notes that the character received in baptism is indelible, but the justification we receive can be lost.[52] Through mortal sin, the presence of charity in the subject is destroyed.[53] To remedy such loss, we then need the re-infusion of charity that accompanies penance. For Aquinas, it is clear that through mortal sin we do not lose our other virtues; in a state of mortal sin we can still act justly, we can still have faith, and we can still be prudent. We do lose the form of those virtues, however, and therefore the possibility that they are meritorious. The theological virtue of charity forms all the virtues making them "strictly true" virtues. For instance, faith that is not formed by charity is lifeless faith. Lifeless faith is still a theological virtue, but its fruit is servile fear (i.e., the fear of punishment) as opposed to the fruit of living faith, filial fear (i.e., the fear of separation

[46] S.T. III.66.3c.
[47] S.T. III.68.1c.
[48] S.T. III.84.5c.
[49] S.T. III.69.8c.
[50] S.T. I.II.113.1c.
[51] S.T. I.II.113.4.ad1.
[52] S.T. III.66.1.ad1.
[53] S.T. II.II.24.12c.

from God).[54] When forming virtues, charity unites its end with the end of the formed virtue. Charity's end is the unity of deeper friendship with God.[55] While the end of justice is to give each person his or her due, when formed by charity, the end of justice is to give each person his or her due for the sake of friendship with God. Formed by charity, all virtuous ends become means to friendship with God.

The formal relationship between charity and the other virtues is destroyed by mortal sin. This disordered state is the occasion for the sacrament of penance.[56] Without going into excess discussion of penance, I want to highlight its similarity to baptism in that penance is the result of God's action in us whereby we are re-infused with charity. Aquinas distinguishes between internal and external penance.[57] Internal penance is a virtue whereby we deplore the sins we have committed. External penance consists of the external acts of religion necessary for the sacrament of penance. Together, internal and external penance make up the sacrament of penance. According to Aquinas, internal penance is the *sacramentum et res* of the sacrament of penance, without which the forgiveness of sins (i.e., the *res tantum*) is not achieved.[58] This necessary internal penance requires charity because "the act of the virtue of penance is directed against sin, through the love of God."[59] In the absence of charity that results from mortal sin, the sinner cannot come to true penance. True penance that is formed by charity is only had through re-infusion "by God immediately without our operating as principal agents."[60] This infusion of charity where there previously was no charity leads Aquinas to say that the sacrament of penance "belongs to the state of beginners, of those, to wit, who are making a fresh start from the state of sin."[61] Like baptism, penance is a sacrament of new beginnings in the life of charity.

[54] S.T. II.II.7.1c.

[55] S.T. II.II.23.1c.

[56] S.T. III.84.2.ad3. In the following discussion of penance I am referring to penance as remedy for mortal sin. To be sure, the sacrament of penance can be a remedy for venial sin, but it "was instituted chiefly for the blotting out of mortal sin."

[57] S.T. III.84.8.

[58] S.T. III.84.1.ad3.

[59] S.T. III.85.6c.

[60] S.T. III.85.5c.

[61] S.T. III.84.8.ad2.

In Aquinas's treatment of baptism and penance, we see that infusion of the theological virtues is the beginning of our spiritual life. Taken on its own, this discussion of baptism and penance leaves us with questions about the relationship between grace, the theological virtues, and justification. Again, Aquinas is using a grammar that is not sufficiently contextualized by the *Tertia Pars*. To fully understand the sacraments, we need to understand how we come to be subjects of the theological virtues and the effects those virtues have in our lives. The answers to these questions are not found in the *Tertia Pars*. Hence, we will need to turn to the *Secunda Pars*'s treatment of the relationship between grace and the theological virtues. This relationship will be the focus of chapter 3.

V. The Eucharist: Increasing Charity

Earlier, I said that my main goal in this chapter is to define the Eucharist as a sacrament that is meant to increase charity. To help enflesh this definition, I am juxtaposing the inaugural character of infusing charity with the active and dynamic character of increasing charity. At the beginning of the previous section, I pointed out that, according to Aquinas, the Eucharist exists to nurture the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ. We can say this because such unity is the *res tantum* of the Eucharist. Just as the purpose of baptism is the justification of the baptized, so the purpose of the Eucharist is the unity of the Church.

In question 79, article 1, of the *Tertia Pars*, Aquinas discusses the effects of the Eucharist. Pointing out that "the spiritual life is the effect of grace," Aquinas says that we can be assured that the Eucharist bestows grace because the Eucharist is ordained toward the nourishment of the spiritual life.[62] Throughout this article, Aquinas repeatedly speaks of the effects of the Eucharist in terms of "life," using the synonymous terms "spiritual life" and "graced life." In considering the relationship between the Eucharist and the spiritual life, Aquinas offers four perspectives from which we might consider the way in which the Eucharist effects its *res tantum*, the unity of the Church.

First, just as the Word became incarnate so that the world might have life, so Christ becomes present in the Eucharist so that we might

[62] S.T. III.79.1sc.

have spiritual life. In Aquinas's words: "By coming sacramentally into man, [Jesus] causes the life of grace." Second, as a sign of Christ's passion, the Eucharist represents the forgiveness of sins that is offered in the Paschal Mystery.[63] Third, because Christ is given as food, the Eucharist "does for the spiritual life all that material food does for the bodily life, namely by sustaining, giving increase, restoring, and giving delight."[64] Finally, in the bread and wine we are given a sign of the Eucharist's effect because they represent unity. Both bread and wine are composed of many grains/grapes that are formed into one bread/wine.[65] These four perspectives function as possible ways to understand the relationship between the Eucharist and its *res tantum*. It would be a mistake to view this exposition as a dissection of the sacrament whereby Aquinas has isolated aspects of the Eucharist and named each part's corresponding result, effectively reducing the Eucharist to a sum of its parts while simultaneously reducing its effect to a sum of these effects. Rather than reduction, we ought to see this article as a meditation on the Eucharist, a meditation that moves from one perspective to another, offering different ways of articulating the Eucharist's relationship to the unity of the Church. From each perspective, Aquinas is discussing the relationship between the Eucharist and its *res tantum*.

In this article, Aquinas is unpacking the significance (strictly speaking) of the Eucharist and its parts. To better illustrate what he is doing in this article, it is helpful to think of the Eucharist as a sentence. Each word in a sentence is an individual sign. Each word signifies something beyond itself. The word "tree," when heard or read, will instantly signify something in the mind of the hearer or reader. When we use multiple signs, however, they affect one another's signification by mutual contextualization. For example, the significance of the word "tree" is altered via contextualization when it is preceded by the word "family." Likewise, the significance of the word "family" is affected in being followed by the word "tree." On their own, words have meaning due only to the context we project on them. But when

[63] Aquinas's understanding of Christ's sacrifice and its connection to the Eucharist will be treated in chap. 5. At this point, I wish to simply point out that Aquinas is not equating the Eucharist with baptism or penance.

[64] S.T. III.79.1c.

[65] Ibid.

words accompany one another they provide each other with context that dictates their significance. The words are no longer subject solely to the arbitrary projections of the hearer's desired context. Although made up of two individual signs, together they are a single sign, irreducible to its parts. Similarly, a sentence is a still more complex yet irreducible sign.

Consider the following sentence: "Studying my family tree makes me feel blessed by the past and responsible for the future." This sentence is a single sign. It communicates a single idea, even while being composed of a number of irreducible signs (e.g., words, phrases, modified nouns, etc.). Carrying this thought process further, a particular sacramental celebration (e.g., the 9:00 a.m. Mass on June 30, 2013, at St. Ignatius parish in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts) is like a sentence. On its own, bread can signify just about anything. When contextualized by an institution narrative (an irreducible sign), bread (another irreducible sign) takes on a particular significance. Made up of many individual signs, the Eucharist is a composite yet irreducible sign with a single *res tantum*: the unity of the ecclesial body. In question 79, article 1, Aquinas is considering various irreducible signs that together make up the irreducible sign of the Eucharist. He is, however, considering them in light of the single *res tantum* of the Eucharist. The effects he enumerates are all descriptions of the single *res tantum* of the Eucharist. This article points out that the spiritual life of the Church and its development are the concrete manifestation of the Church's unity.

In the fifth chapter, I will return to this article in order to examine the link between Christ's sacramental presence, Christ's sacrifice, and the Eucharist's *res tantum*. Before I can adequately carry out that examination, however, it is necessary to understand what Aquinas means when he refers to the spiritual life. When he speaks of the effects of the Eucharist in terms of "life" he is not speaking of an abstract concept. Rather, his use of the term "life" refers to a concrete and historical reality. The body may be mystical, but its unity is not. The unity of the mystical body of Christ is the unity of a Church that lives the spiritual life in its members. The degree to which the mystical body of Christ lives out its spiritual life is the degree to which it is united.

There is an assumption undergirding Aquinas's discussion of the nurturing nature of the Eucharist. Namely, in describing ecclesial

unity in terms of the spiritual life, Aquinas is assuming the presence of charity. As I noted in the previous section, the infusion of charity is the beginning of the spiritual life. Hence, any effect brought about by the Eucharist assumes the presence of charity in the subject. The textual proof that Aquinas thinks of the Eucharist not as a moment of infusion but rather as a celebration of preexistent charity can be found when he points out that union with Christ is a consequence of charity. In article 5 of question 79 Aquinas is discussing whether the punishment due to sin is forgiven by receiving the Eucharist.

> Through the power of the sacrament it produces directly that effect for which it was instituted. Now it was instituted not for satisfaction, but for nourishing spiritually through union between Christ and his members, as nourishment is united with the person nourished. But because this union is the effect of charity, from the fervor of which man obtains forgiveness, not only of guilt but also of punishment, hence it is that as a consequence, and by concomitance with the chief effect, man obtains forgiveness of the punishment, not indeed of the entire punishment, but according to the measure of his devotion and fervor.[66]

Union with Christ is an effect of charity. The union with Christ offered in the Eucharist is not a matter of metabolizing a divine substance. Nor is any individual's union with Christ (much less the mere presence of Christ) the purpose of the Eucharist. Christ's presence is a means to the union which is a means to increasing the unity of the mystical body of Christ. All this is to emphasize the fact that the Eucharist needs preexistent charity. Aquinas puts it bluntly in article 7 of question 79:

> As Christ's Passion benefits all, for the forgiveness of sin and the attaining of grace and glory, whereas it produces no effect except in those who are united with Christ's Passion through faith and charity, so likewise this sacrifice [i.e., the Eucharist], which is the memorial of our Lord's Passion, has no effect except in those who are united with this sacrament through faith and charity.[67]

[66] S.T. III.79.5c.
[67] S.T. III.79.7.ad2.

While Aquinas presupposes preexistent charity, he also sees fit to redefine the Eucharist's *res tantum* in terms of charity. In article 4 of question 79 he states that "the reality of [the Eucharist] is charity, not only as to its habit, but also as to its act, which is kindled [*excitatur*] in this sacrament."[68] When Aquinas says that the reality of the sacrament is the habit and act of charity, he is saying that an increase in the unity of the ecclesial body, insofar as it is the *res tantum* of the Eucharist, is synonymous with an increase in the presence of the community's *active* charity. The Eucharist begins with charity by which the individual is united to Christ. This sacramental union is meant to increase charity and its acts in the subject. When such an increase of charity and its acts occurs throughout a community, the unity of that ecclesial body of Christ is said to have been nourished and increased. The theological virtue of charity is both the source and summit of the Eucharist. It is both prerequisite and purpose. Hence, the Eucharist is a moment not of infusion but of increase.

While baptism and penance effect justification insofar as they infuse the theological virtues, the Eucharist effects sanctification insofar as it increases charity in the subject. In other words, the Eucharist deepens the spiritual life of the Church. The unity of the ecclesial body of Christ, the grace toward which the Eucharist aims, is an increase in the formally active presence of charity in that communal body. This treatment of the Eucharist leaves us with questions about what it means for a subject to increase in charity and how, practically speaking, that increase relates to the unity of the mystical body of Christ. The purpose of the fourth chapter will be to examine the relationship between increasing in charity and deepening one's spiritual life.

Unlike the infusion of theological virtues accomplished through the sacraments of baptism and penance, increasing in active charity necessarily involves human action. By distinguishing between the individual's union with Christ and the unity of the ecclesial body, Aquinas has made (what today we might call) the horizontal aspect of the spiritual life an essential aspect of eucharistic grace. The unity of the Church cannot be reduced to multiple and simultaneous unions with Christ. For example, my right hand and my left hand are not

[68] S.T. III.79.4c.

part of my body simply because they are each united to my head. Rather, they belong to one body because by virtue of their union to my head they are then able to work together according to their nature. The unity of my body does indeed depend on the union between my parts and my head, but the unity of my body cannot be reduced to the sum of those unions. The Church is not a body by virtue of each Christian's connection to Christ alone; rather, it is a body by virtue of the formal effect those unions have on the body's ability to function as one. The spiritual life is not a state of having charity; the spiritual life is actions that are formed by charity. Simply put, *my* union *with* Christ is inseparable from and ordered toward the *community's* unity *as* Christ. It is this necessary horizontal aspect of the ecclesial body's unity that gives rise to what will be the focus of our fourth chapter. Having spent the second and third chapters examining the relationship between grace and the theological virtue of charity, the fourth chapter will examine the role of the moral virtues in this relationship. Put differently, the fourth chapter will seek to understand what role human action plays in the spiritual life.

VI. Unanswered Questions

Too often, readers of Aquinas pick up a copy of the *Summa Theologiae*, begin reading, and assume they know the meaning of the words they are reading. We fail to recognize that words are always contextualized by their grammars. We see words that are readily recognizable to us (e.g., "grace," "cause," and "participation"), and we are too quick to interpret them based on a modern grammar we anachronistically project onto them. The work of the present chapter has been to convince the reader that language being used in the *Tertia Pars* is part of a grammar that has its foundations constructed in the *Secunda Pars*. The unanswered questions I have listed throughout this chapter, then, are the result of a lack in context.

In light of Aquinas's discussion of sacramental signification and causality, we were left with questions about the relationship between grace, belief, and participation. In the next chapter, I will retrieve the grammar of grace that Aquinas constructs primarily in the *Prima Secundae*. This grammar will give us the context to answer questions about the relationship between grace, belief, and participation. In light of Aquinas's treatment of the infusion of theological virtues in

baptism and penance, we were left with questions about the relationship between grace, the theological virtues, and salvation. Likewise, in light of the treatment of the Eucharist as increasing charity, we were left with the question, how does the Eucharist increase charity? Turning to the *Secunda Secundae*, I will retrieve the grammars of virtue that allow us to contextualize and properly answer these questions. Finally, building on the examinations of grace and charity in chapters 2 and 3, the fourth chapter will look closely at how the moral and intellectual virtues aid our increase in charity. We will see that the grammars of grace and virtue that contextualize Aquinas's treatment of the Eucharist necessarily include these moral virtues. In short, the next three chapters of this project are essentially the retrieval of grammars that will contextualize our inquiry into the relationship between the Eucharist and its *res tantum*. Without the context of the *Secunda Pars*, we simply cannot comprehend the *Tertia Pars*.

These grammars of grace and virtue will make it clear that, contrary to the claims of Chauvet, Aquinas has not removed the Church from his eucharistic theology. On the contrary; the spiritual life of the Church is the context without which Aquinas's eucharistic theology cannot be understood.

CHAPTER TWO

Grace as the Embodied Spiritual Life

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

—2 Peter 1:4

We begin with questions. Our discussion of sacramental signification in the previous chapter left us with questions that are unanswered by the *Tertia Pars*. Specifically, we were left with questions about the relationship between grace, participation, and belief. In the *Tertia Pars*, Aquinas tells us that grace is "nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature."[1] The purpose of this chapter is to unpack this classically brief Thomistic definition. Understanding what this definition means will give us an insight into what exactly the Eucharist functions to achieve. In essence, this chapter intends to show that Aquinas does not see grace as a reified object that can be produced. Rather, in this definition, grace is understood in terms of action insofar as it leads the human person to know, will, and move (i.e., it leads to moral/human action).[2] In the *Prima Secundae*, Aquinas

[1] S.T. III.62.1c.

[2] Throughout this chapter I will refer to "human action" regularly. Unless otherwise noted, I am using this term to refer to the moral action that moves toward the Final End through knowledge and love. For a brief exposition of how Aquinas understands *humanis actibus*, see Georg Wieland, "Happiness," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephan J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 58–59.

constructs a theology of grace in which grace is an external principle of human action. In other words, grace is intrinsically related to human action as the condition for the possibility of human action.[3] The context of the *Prima Secundae*'s discussion of grace nullifies any attempt to divorce grace (insofar as it is considered in relation to the spiritual life) from human action. From the perspective of the spiritual life, grace and human action are intrinsically united.

This chapter will proceed in four sections. First, I will discuss the overarching structure of the *Summa*, which acts as the broad context for Aquinas's discussion of grace. This contextualization allows us to see that any discussion of grace presupposes its role in the spiritual life. Again, grace has a function that dictates the parameters of Aquinas's investigation into the nature of grace. Hence, we must begin by understanding this function and the implications it has on Aquinas's ensuing constructive exposition of grace. Second, I will turn to an examination of what Aquinas means by "a participation in the Divine Nature." Here, I will show that knowledge and love of God are constitutive of graced participation. Third, based on the previous chapter's discussion of sacramental signification as the primary mode of causing our participation in the Divine Nature, I will discuss the role of belief and signification in graced participation. While saving the more in-depth examination of the theological virtues for the following chapter, this section will briefly gesture toward the role of signification in belief so as to highlight the embodied nature of participation. Finally, I will conclude by discussing the cooperative nature of graced participation.

I. The Teleological Nature of the Spiritual Life

Before considering what Aquinas means when he uses the word "participation" we must begin to understand the foundations of the grammar he uses to contextualize his considerations of "participation." The *Prima Secundae* is part of a whole. Therefore, to more fully understand its content (and to avoid misinterpretation), it is necessary to examine the relationship between the whole and this part.

[3] Theo Kobusch, "Grace," in Pope, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 209–11.

1. The Structure of the Summa Theologiae

Oceans of ink and countless bits of binary code have been used discussing the structure of the *Summa*.[4] While there are many ways one might organize this great text, most of them agree on the fact that there is a teleological structure to the *Summa*. Broadly put, the *Summa* is concerned with the union between God and Creation. This union has its foundations in the causal relationships between God and Creation. I say "relationships" because God is the efficient cause of Creation as well as the final cause of Creation.[5] Creation is *coming from* God, and Creation is *going to* God. This famous and much commented upon *exitus et reditus* structure of the *Summa* is, in essence, an account of the spiritual life: Creation's pathway from and back to God.

In order to avoid superfluous discussion of the possible textual divisions that could manifest the *Summa*'s structure, I will focus on a single piece of textual evidence for the claim that the *Summa*'s structure is teleological: the prologue to the *Prima Secundae*.

> Since, as Damascene states, man is said to be made in God's image, insofar as the image implies "an intelligent being endowed with free will and self-movement": now that we have treated of the exemplar, i.e. God, and of those things which came forth from the power of God in accordance with His will; it remains for us to treat of His image, i.e. man, inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free will and control over his actions.[6]

Within the *Prima Pars*, Aquinas examines God and God's act of creation: *exitus*. In what remains of the *Summa*, Aquinas examines Creation's (re)union with God. We can call this action *reditus* based on the inaugural question of the *Secunda Pars*: Of Man's Last End. Briefly summarized, the last end of authentic human action is attained

[4] I will not survey the history of this discussion. For a wonderfully succinct summary of the major movements, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 150–53.

[5] S.T. I.44.1&4.

[6] S.T. I.II.pr.

by knowing and loving God.[7] The unity of the *Summa* is rooted in this teleological structure.

In a careful consideration of the *Prima Pars*, there are various ways to superimpose organizational structures onto its content. As I am only concerned here with a demonstration of the larger teleological structure of the entire *Summa*, my comments regarding the *Prima Pars* will focus briefly on Aquinas's description of God's act of Creation. According to Aquinas, to say that we are created is to say that we participate in Being (*esse*).[8] All things that exist do so insofar as they participate in the Being that is God. It is significant that the first analogy Aquinas uses to describe the action of God's Creation is "participation" (*participant*). In the *Prima Pars*, however, the consideration of participation can be said to have an archeological structure as opposed to a teleological structure. That is to say, participation is seen as a relationship between Creation and its source or beginning (*arche*). As Jean-Pierre Torrell suggests: "One should not imagine creation as an isolated act that occurred in a distant past; rather, it is a present reality."[9] To be is to participate in God. In other words, the ontology of a creature is always actively relational. We will have cause to return to this archeological treatment of participation later on; for now, it suffices to say that we are always emanating from God through participation in God's *esse*.

In the first article of the *Secunda Pars*, Aquinas tells us that humankind is, by its nature, directed toward God as to its end.[10] Aquinas has been restating this fact since the first article of the first question of the first part. Human beings naturally have a supernatural end. "This treatise considers how the person either reaches or falls short of the proper human end through his or her actions."[11] The *Secunda Pars*, then, is an examination of human action (i.e., actions that come from free will and reason).[12] Working from general considerations (*Prima Secundae*) to particular considerations (*Secunda Secundae*),

[7] S.T. I.II.1.8c.

[8] S.T. I.44.1c.

[9] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Aquinas'* Summa*: Background, Structure, and Reception*, trans. Benedict M. Guevin (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 24.

[10] S.T. I.II.1.1c.

[11] Wieland, "Happiness," 57. In this quote, the author is referring to the treatise on happiness (qq. 1–5), but it is just as easily said of the entirety of the *Secunda Pars*.

[12] S.T. I.II.1.1c.

Aquinas describes human action in terms of the last end, as both the source and completion of human action.[13] In short, the *Secunda Pars* describes the *reditus* in terms of human action.

In the unfinished *Tertia Pars*, Aquinas discusses Christ and the sacraments. Another way of describing the *Tertia Pars* is to say that it treats of God's instrumental activity in Creation. As we saw in the previous chapter, Christ and the sacraments are instruments of God's salvific activity. Because humankind has been created with a supernatural end, we need divine assistance to achieve that end. The activity of God in Creation, which is carried out with humankind's cooperation, is the external principle of human action. As with the *Secunda Pars*, the *Tertia Pars* is a description of the *reditus*. Specifically, it is a description of the means of our return to God. Insofar as these means are an external principle of human action toward our supernatural end, they are called salvific. If the *Prima Secundae* is a description of the *reditus* in terms of general human action, and the *Secunda Secunda*e is a description of the *reditus* in terms of particular human action, then the *Tertia Pars* can be called a description of the *reditus* in terms of salvation history.[14] As christologically founded, the *Tertia Pars* is still a consideration of particular human action. The actions of Christ, even if they are divine instruments, are human actions. Likewise, the sacraments, even if they are divine instruments, are human actions.[15]

To close this consideration of the *Summa*'s structure, I wish to point out that this structure is simultaneously teleological and archeological. It is *exitus* et *reditus*, not *exitus* tunc *reditus*. At the beginning of this section I said that the foundation of the union between God and Creation is the causal relationships between the two. Considered from the perspective of God, there is but one relationship between God and Creation. Considered from the perspective of Creation, we can conceptually distinguish a plurality of relationships between God and Creation insofar as God is said to be both final and efficient cause. When the perspectives of these different relationships dictate the way participation is explained, we end up with archeological and teleological treatments of participation.

[13] Torrell, *Aquinas'* Summa, 29.

[14] Or, perhaps less anachronistically, the *Tertia Pars* describes what Jean-Pierre Torrell has called the *reditus per Christum*; cf. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 152.

[15] This, of course, is not a denial of their status as divine actions.

Another way of understanding this structure would be to see *exitus et reditus* as two distinct grammars employed in the description of the relationship between God and Creation. The grammar of *exitus* is founded on seeing God as the source of Creation. Conversely, the grammar of *reditus* is founded on seeing God as the goal of Creation. The *Secunda Pars* and *Tertia Pars* are constructed using a grammar of *reditus*. As such, they have a distinctive teleological structure. However, if we bear in mind that these grammars are essentially analogical and are being used to describe the same relationship, then we must also say that such teleological structure is necessarily translatable to an archeological structure if we were to switch to a grammar of *exitus*. In other words, any description of Creation's return to God is simultaneously a description of our procession from God.

After our consideration of the role of the *Prima Secundae* in this teleological structure of the *Summa*, the remainder of this chapter will be spent explaining that grace is the description of God's relationship to Creation when considered in terms of human action. As we will see, the *Prima Secundae*'s description of grace is largely dictated by the grammar of *reditus* that Aquinas employs throughout the *Secunda Pars* and *Tertia Pars*.

2. *The Place of the* Prima Secundae *in the* Summa

Within the larger *exitus et reditus* structure of the *Summa*, the *Prima Secundae* is where the *reditus* is described in terms of teleological human action. The *Prima Secundae*'s inquiry is organized into general examinations of the ends and means of human action. The examination of ends is accomplished briefly in questions 1–5. God is the Final End of human action. Specifically, our Final End is union with God through knowledge and love. The examination of the means considers the internal principles of human action (powers and habits in qq. 6–89) and external principles of human action (the law in qq. 90–108 and grace in qq. 109–14).[16] For our purposes I will focus on the significance of the placement of the treatise on grace.

[16] In reality, for Aquinas there are only two external principles of human action: the devil who moves us toward evil (treated in S.T. I.114) and God who moves us toward good. As the prologue of S.T. I.II.90 points out, God is the external principle insofar as God instructs us through law and assists us through grace.

Metaphysical inquiry tends to be concerned with first principles. This holds true for the *Prima Secundae*'s metaphysics of human action. In organizing the *Prima Secundae*, however, Aquinas does not put first things first. Quite the opposite is true. Admittedly, Aquinas begins the *Prima Secundae* by treating the last end of human action. Nevertheless, this consideration of God's role in human action does not describe God in terms of a first principle of human action.[17] Rather, it is at the very end of his metaphysics of human action that Aquinas describes God in terms of an external, first principle of human action. This divine action is called grace. As Theo Kobusch points out: "The doctrine of grace is thus not an accidental addition to the doctrine of act, but substantially necessary for the metaphysician of morals or anyone wishing to trace human action to its root."[18] Grace is considered metaphysically, not as to its ontology, but as to its role in human action. As we will see in the following section, grace is the necessary condition for the possibility of human action.

In the previous chapter we saw that the spiritual life is the life of union with God. If our final end is union with God through knowledge and love, then any description of human action toward its Final End is a description of the spiritual life. To close this section, I will to reiterate the fact that the description of God's relationship with Creation that uses a grammar of *reditus* is marked by a teleological structure insofar as it is primarily concerned with the role of human action. With that in mind, we can say that the spiritual life, as it is described throughout the *Summa*, is teleological in nature. Therefore, any discussion of the relationship between grace and the spiritual life (including the *Tertia Pars*'s sacramental theology) will bear the marks of this grammar.

II. Grace and the Spiritual Life

Having examined the teleological nature of the spiritual life, we now examine the role of grace in that life. As I stated above, the

[17] Any description of God as last end implies a relationship to the intellect in which God is known by the intellect. When described in terms of "grace," however, God's relationship to human action is prior to the intellect's knowledge of God as last end. Hence, in the metaphysics of human acts, grace is the first principle.

[18] Kobusch, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 209.

purpose of this examination is to more fully understand what Aquinas means when he says that grace "is nothing short of a partaking [*participatio*] of the Divine Nature."[19] I begin this examination with reference to a passage of particular import from the *Prima Pars*. Here, Aquinas is discussing what it means to say that humankind is made in the image of God:

> Wherefore we see that the image of God is in man in three ways. First, inasmuch as man possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind, which is common to all men. Secondly, inasmuch as man actually and habitually knows and loves God, though imperfectly; and this image consists in the conformity of grace. Thirdly, inasmuch as man knows and loves God perfectly; and this image consists in the likeness of glory. Wherefore on the words, "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us" (Psalm 4:7), the gloss distinguishes a threefold image of "creation," of "re-creation," and of "likeness." The first is found in all men, the second only in the just, the third only in the blessed.[20]

By this "image of creation," humankind "possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God." In other words, we are "intelligent beings endowed with free-will and self-movement" capable of moving toward our last end.[21] The "image of re-creation" that "consists in the conformity of grace" is, in essence, the active spiritual life. The difference between these two images is the difference between potency and act. In the remainder of this section, I argue that the difference between the image of creation and the image of re-creation is the same as the difference between a *share* in the Image of God and *participation* in the Divine Nature. Understanding how a human person moves from the potential image of creation into the active image of re-creation will help us to understand grace as a participation in the Divine Nature. As such, we will have gained insight into the role of grace in the spiritual life.

[19] S.T. I.II.112.1c.
[20] S.T. I.93.4c.
[21] S.T. I.II.pr.

1. Grace Actualizing the Image of God

Returning to the prologue of the *Prima Secundae*, we see that we are said to be made in the Image of God insofar as we are intelligent beings with free will and self-movement. What, then, does it mean for such an image to move toward its final end? As we will see, grace is the external principle of that movement insofar as grace moves the intellect to know God and moves the will to love God. What remains for us to examine is exactly why grace is necessary and how grace achieves this movement.

In questions 79–83 of the *Prima Pars*, Aquinas examines the powers of the human person. "The intellectual soul approaches to the divine likeness, more than inferior creatures, in being able to acquire perfect goodness."[22] The soul accomplishes this acquisition through the exercise of intellectual and appetitive powers.[23] With respect to the intellectual power, the "reason, intellect, and mind are one power."[24] Through the exercise of reason, the intellect comes to understand truths.[25] When, through the exercise of this intellectual power, we use reason to grow in understanding, our share in the Divine Image is active. As Aquinas reminds us in question 109, however, "Higher intelligible things the human intellect cannot know unless it be perfected by a stronger light."[26] While we may naturally be capable of some limited knowledge regarding God's existence (e.g., the *quinqae viae* and other forms of general revelation), this knowledge is neither necessary nor sufficient for knowing God as the Final End of human existence. This presents us with a problem.

We recall that human action is concerned with the last end: God. We attain our last end (i.e., perfect goodness is acquired) through knowledge and love of God. This union with God is called happiness. In an article where Aquinas discusses whether this happiness is an operation of the intellect or the will, he cites Augustine: "Love ranks above knowledge in moving, but knowledge precedes love in

[22] S.T. I.77.2.ad1. Note the language of "likeness" in conjunction with language of potency, "able."

[23] It is this exercise, the movement from potency to act, that constitutes the shift from sharing in image to participation in nature.

[24] S.T. I.79sc.

[25] S.T. I.79c.

[26] S.T. I.II.109.1c.

attaining: *for naught is loved saved what is known*."[27] Hence, according to Aquinas, happiness consists primarily in an act of the intellect. But, as Aquinas constantly reminds us, it is seemingly impossible for a human being to be happy. Due to the immaterial nature of our last end, our material nature precludes any natural ability to know our last end as such. With regard to our happiness, human beings are naturally impotent. In other words, the internal principles of human action (i.e., powers and habits) are insufficient for happiness.

Similarly, the appetitive power, the human will, is impotent when it comes to naturally attaining its supernatural end. First, as Aquinas points out in question 3 of the *Prima Secundae*, what is not known cannot be loved.[28] Therefore, if the intellect is naturally impotent with respect to knowledge of its last end, then the will is left without an object to move toward through love. Second, even with graced knowledge of God, the will needs the assistance of grace to move it to love. In the second article of question 109, "On the Necessity of Grace," Aquinas points out that even prior to the corruption of our nature, humankind was not capable of performing meritorious works. "But in the state of integrity, as regards the sufficiency of the operative power, man by his natural endowments could wish and do the good proportionate to his nature, such as the good of acquired virtue; but not surpassing good, as the good of infused virtue."[29] Without grace, even in a prelapsarian state of integrity, a human person would be unable to act meritoriously toward his or her final end. All the more, then, is corrupt human nature incapable of loving its last end without assistance: "In the state of corrupt nature man falls short of [loving God as the last end] in the appetite of his rational will, which, unless it is cured by God's grace follows its private good, on account of the corruption of nature."[30] Based on the impotence of our human nature intensified by its corruption, we know that grace is necessary if we are to move toward our final end. If we are to have our share in the Image of God actualized (i.e., if we are to know and love God), then we require the help of grace. It now remains for us to examine, at

[27] S.T. I.II.3.4.ad4.
[28] Ibid.
[29] S.T. I.II.109.2c.
[30] S.T. I.II.109.3c.

least initially, what it means to say that grace is the external principle of this actualization.

In article 9 of question 109, Aquinas begins by pointing out that God's help can be spoken of as twofold: as a habitual gift and as God's moving us to act. "First, [grace can be spoken of as] a habitual gift whereby corrupted human nature is healed, and after being healed is lifted up so as to work deeds meritorious of everlasting life."[31] This habitual gift heals our corrupted nature (i.e., justifies us) and aids that newly justified nature in actively moving toward its final end. Second, in addition to the language of "habitual gift," we can speak of grace in terms of God moving us to act. This second way of speaking about grace is first discussed in relation to *preparation* for receiving the infused habitual gift whereby we are justified. In article 6 of question 109, Aquinas points out that "every form requires a disposition." In other words, habits (formal causes of human action[32]) can only be present in a power that is rightly disposed.[33] Speaking of this prerequisite disposition, Aquinas is very clear that this predisposition must be accomplished by the free will of the person receiving the habitual gift. He is equally clear, however, that "free-will can only be turned to God when God turns it."[34] Grace, then, is spoken of as God's movement of the human will so as to prepare the person to receive the habitual gift. In addition to speaking of this second type of divine help as preparation, Aquinas examines how God's moving us to act might be spoken of in relation to the habitual gift that has already been received. Specifically, he says that, after having received the habitual gift of grace, we need the continued assistance of grace in order that we might persevere (i.e., be "guided and guarded" so as to be "moved by God to act righteously").[35] "The gift of habitual

[31] S.T. I.II.109.9c.

[32] S.T. I.II.110.2.ad1.

[33] We will return to an in-depth discussion of dispositive preparation for habits in the following chapter. For now, I simply want to emphasize that grace, even when spoken of in terms other than "habitual gift," is still concerned with human action. As divine help, grace is an external principle of human action.

[34] S.T. I.II.109.6.ad1. While this vexing passage seems to a modern eye a clear provocation, for now I must put off any further discussion of *liberum arbitrium*. Suffice it to say that when Aquinas writes *liberum arbitrium* he means something quite different than when the modern writer, so influenced by the enlightenment, writes "free will."

[35] S.T. I.II.109.9c.

grace is not therefore given to us that we may no longer need the Divine help; for every creature needs to be preserved in the good received from Him."[36] So, not only is grace spoken of as the habitual gift that forms our intellect and our will so as to be capable of moving toward our final end; grace is also spoken of as the movement of God in us whereby we are prepared for God's formation and helped to persevere in that movement toward our final end. To speak about this twofold divine assistance is to speak about grace as the external principle that actualizes the Image of God in us. Nevertheless, to avoid reifying these distinctions, I now turn to a passage that is crucial for understanding the relationship between all of these various ways of speaking about grace.

Having laid out this twofold manner of speaking about divine assistance to human movement, in the reply to the second objection of article 9, Aquinas provides us with perhaps his simplest explanation of what it means to say that grace is an external principle that actualizes the Image of God: "The operation of the Holy Ghost, which moves and protects, is not circumscribed by the effect of habitual grace which it causes in us; but beyond this effect He, together with the Father and the Son, moves and protects us."[37] While Aquinas here is defending his rhetorical distinction between the twofold nature of divine help, this passage is crucial for understanding the simplicity of grace. That is to say, while Aquinas is perpetually restating that grace can be considered in two ways, he is not implying that God "dispenses" two types of help. Rather, the Holy Spirit's operation in us can be named variously, depending on the perspectives and the mode of inquiry through which we examine it. Regardless of how many distinctions we invent to describe this pneumatological operation (cf. question 111), it is perpetually simple. Therefore, when we take a step back and ask what it means to say that grace is the external principle that actualizes our Image of God, thereby moving us to participate in the Divine Nature, we can see that it is "the operation of the Holy Ghost" that accomplishes this actualization.

For example, when considering the meritorious actions that are the result of grace insofar as grace is considered in relation to actual human movement, Aquinas points out that such action may be con-

[36] S.T. I.II.109.9.ad1.
[37] S.T. I.II.109.9.ad2.

sidered in two ways. First, it may be considered insofar as that movement proceeds from the movement of the free will. Second, it may be considered insofar as "it proceeds from the grace of the Holy Ghost moving us to life everlasting."[38] What I emphasize here is that these are not two different types of meritorious action. Rather, all meritorious action (i.e., all graced human action that is our participation in the Divine Nature) is the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit within us.

We will spend the remainder of this and the following chapter providing the thus-far-avoided description of this pneumatological operation in terms of the habitual gift called the theological virtues. For now I point out that, as the external principle that actualizes the Image of God in us, moving us to know and love God, the Holy Spirit's operation in us is nothing other than our participation in the Divine Nature.[39]

2. The Spiritual Life Conforming to Grace

Thus far in this chapter, my aim has been to show that it is not possible to speak of grace without simultaneously (even if indirectly) speaking about human action. Examining grace in terms of actualization is helpful when trying to understand the active nature of the graced spiritual life (i.e., in its historical particularity). However, we are left with a difficult question: is grace the external principle that causes our participation, or is grace the participation itself? In order to answer this we must speak briefly about the limitations of grammars and analogy. Theo Kobusch points out that Aquinas relies quite

[38] S.T. I.II.114.3c.

[39] This is an important point because it stops us from reifying habits. The language of habits is a metaphor for explaining the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit's life in our lives. Question 110.4.ad4 is a great example of this. Grace (i.e., the operation of the Spirit) is not in our powers but in the essence of the soul. The Spirit relates to who we are at our most fundamental, not to our accidents, which might be lacking (e.g., through mental disability). Therefore, if, due to the lack of capacity, the Spirit's life does not manifest in action that we would call virtuous, we do not ascribe that to lack of grace (i.e., the absence of the Spirit). Rather, the Holy Spirit relates to who we are. Hence, Aquinas's insistence that all things are capable of loving God (cf. I.II.109.3c). While the use of *caritas* in describing the love expressed by an inanimate creature would make little sense insofar as a habit needs a power, such love is still the Holy Spirit working in what is present.

heavily on analogies of motion in constructing this treatise on grace.[40] The problem with speaking metaphorically about God and God's relationship to Creation is that we humans can easily fall into the trap of univocity. While Aquinas is merely emphasizing the dynamic nature of grace, the analogical use of motion implies chronological order. When imagining the relationship between grace and human action in terms of motion, it is difficult not to see God's action as the first domino that externally acts upon the domino of our own action. In short, we are confronted with a chronology that leads us to ask if grace is prior to our participation or if grace *is* our participation.

If we return to Aquinas's description of the image of re-creation found in the *Prima Pars*, we can see a way of talking about grace and the spiritual life that does not rely on the metaphors of motion. Specifically, Aquinas tells us that the image of re-creation consists in the conformity of grace. In other words, participation in the Divine Nature is tantamount to being formed by grace. If God's relationship to us is one, this conformity is not chronologically prior to our knowledge and love of God. Much like the grammar of creation, which defies the constraints of chronology (i.e., God's act of creation is not an event in the past), so the grammar of grace cannot be fully understood in terms of spatial movement. That is to say, the external principle of human action is not the first domino that starts the process of moving. Rather, it is the underlying possibility of our movement insofar as it provides the order and movement of our soul. From one perspective grace forms the spiritual life (i.e., actualizing the Image of God). From another perspective, the spiritual life conforms to grace. Human action is not subsequent to grace. Human action is simultaneous to grace, manifesting it. In a way, we can speak of human action as a necessary condition for *the experience of* grace. As such, human action is the sacrament of God's action.

III. Belief and Signs

Having spent the majority of this chapter showing how Aquinas relates grace and human action, I now turn to some preliminary and brief considerations of the role of belief in graced participation. I want to point out, however, that in this section I will limit my comments

[40] Kobusch, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 214.

to a consideration of the relationship between signification and belief. I will leave a consideration of the relationship between faith and charity until the following chapter. The current section aims solely at providing a preliminary gesture toward the developed sacramental theology that will be explicated in the fifth chapter.

Thus far, I have explained Aquinas's presentation of grace in terms of an actualized Image of God through which we are said to participate in the Divine Nature. As we saw, it is through the infusion of a habitual gift that grace justifies us and makes us capable of performing meritorious deeds. In a particularly helpful passage from question 110, article 4, Aquinas offers some insight into what exactly is meant by "habitual gift" (*habituale donum*). "For as man in his intellective power participates in the Divine knowledge through the virtue of faith, and in his power of will participates in the Divine love through the virtue of charity, so also in the nature of the soul does he participate in the Divine Nature, after the manner of likeness through a certain regeneration or re-creation."[41] The habitual gifts that are responsible for the movement of the intellect and the will are faith and charity, respectively. It is through these theological virtues that we are said to participate in the Divine Nature. I will have much to say about the relationship between faith and charity in the following chapter. But since we are here concerned with the role of signification and belief in graced participation, I now turn to an examination of the interior act of faith: belief (*credere*).

To begin this examination of belief, I would like to reiterate that faith is necessary if humankind is to move toward its Final End. As I pointed out above, in question 109, Aquinas says that humans can naturally know some truth without the grace of God. We are naturally bestowed with "intelligible light, which of itself is sufficient for knowing certain intelligible things."[42] However, "higher intelligible things the human intellect cannot know, unless it be perfected by a stronger

[41] S.T. I.II.110.4c. To reiterate, these are not three different moments in which the human person is said to participate in the Divine Life. Rather, they are three ways of speaking about the relationship between God and human action. Grace is participation through an actualized Image of God. Through knowledge and love of God, we are said to participate in the Divine Nature. While we can and will, like Aquinas, speak at length and with myriad distinctions about grace, all of that speech can be simply summed up: grace is nothing else than a participation in the Divine Nature.

[42] S.T. I.II.109.1c.

light, viz., the light of faith or prophecy which is called the *light of grace*, inasmuch as it is added to nature."[43] Here, we must point out that this light of grace is not an increase in potency (i.e., we are not given the ability to see by some superhuman mode). Rather, this light of grace, insofar as it is the extrinsic principle of the intellect's movement toward its supernatural end, is called the infused habit of faith.[44] Faith is said to perfect our nature (specifically, our natural intellectual powers) insofar as it is a principle of our act of knowing God. To perfect a power is to move it to act. With regard to the last end of the intellect, an extrinsic principle is needed in order to achieve knowledge of (i.e., union with) that end.

Faith moves us toward this union with God insofar as it is a habit that inclines us to believe. When examining the nature of belief, Aquinas, following Augustine, says that to believe is to think with assent (*cum assensione cogitare*).[45] More specifically, "belief" refers to "the movement of the mind while yet deliberating, and not yet perfected by the clear sight of truth."[46] That is to say, "thinking with assent" describes a mode of thinking that is similar to the certain knowledge we acquire through demonstrations (i.e., what Aquinas calls *scientia*) insofar as belief "cleaves firmly to one side," but dissimilar to *scientia* insofar as "[belief's] knowledge does not attain the perfection of clear sight."[47] Simply put, the difference between saying "she knows" and "she believes" is that belief is certain knowledge of an *unseen* object.

Faith is called a *theological* virtue because its unseen object is God.[48] That is to say, faith is the virtue whereby the intellect is inclined toward belief in God. When considering the knowledge and love of God that constitutes our participation in the Divine Nature, the faithful act of belief is union through knowledge whereby our intellect participates in the Divine Nature. To properly understand what it means to say that God is the object of faith, however, we must take

[43] Ibid.
[44] Kobusch, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 210.
[45] S.T. II.II.2.1.
[46] S.T. II.II.2.1c.
[47] Ibid.
[48] S.T. I.II.62.1c.

the time to understand the embodied process that constitutes belief in God.

While faith's object is unseen (God), this unseen object is known through objects that are seen.

> Accordingly the object of faith may be considered in two ways. First, as regards the thing itself which is believed, and thus the object of faith is something simple, namely the thing itself about which we have faith. Secondly, on the part of the believer, and in this respect the object of faith is something complex by way of a proposition.[49]

Put differently, faith has a complex object insofar as "the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower. Now the mode proper to the human intellect is to know the truth by synthesis and analysis."[50] Faith needs to be provided with the complex objects through which God is known. Without unnecessary examination of Aquinas's theory of human cognition, it will suffice to say that the faithful act of believing is not exempt from the limitations of the human body. These limitations are attested to in question 12 of the *Prima Pars*, where Aquinas is discussing human knowledge of God:

> Although by the revelation of grace in this life we cannot know of God "what He is," and thus are united to Him as to one unknown; still we know Him more fully according as many and more excellent of His effects are demonstrated to us, and according as we attribute to Him some things known by divine revelation, to which natural reason cannot reach, as, for instance, that God is Three and One.[51]

According to Aquinas, our union with God through our faithful belief is our union to a known unknown. There is always a mediacy and an absence[52] that marks our intellectual union with God. For example,

[49] S.T. II.II.1.2c.

[50] Ibid.

[51] S.T. I.12.13.ad1.

[52] To be sure, the absence of God here is a function of our naturally impotent experience and not of God's withdrawal. Nothing can exist without participating in the presence of God.

when discussing the object of faith, Aquinas spends much time examining the necessity of expressing faith in collections of propositional articles called symbols (i.e., creeds). These symbols are necessary so that the complex objects of faith (i.e., the propositional articles of faith) "might the more easily be proposed to all."[53] The faithful act of belief is directed first toward what is seen and known (i.e., the signs and symbols of revelation) so that it might ultimately be directed toward what is unseen and known as unknown (i.e., God). The historical and embodied nature of belief is further emphasized when we consider that, in addition to the need for signs and symbols, those complex objects need to be "proposed" to those who might believe in them.

Hence, Aquinas attests to the embodied and historical nature of belief and signification when he points out that "Divine revelation reaches those of lower degree through those who are over them."[54] Implicit in this theory is an emphasis on the historical nature of revelation. The human mode of knowing requires particular and complex objects through which God is known. This leads Aquinas to posit a cause of faith beyond the infusion of the habitual gift.

> First, that the things which are of faith should be proposed to man: this is necessary in order that man believe anything explicitly. . . . Those things which are of faith surpass human reason, hence they do not come to man's knowledge unless God reveal them. To some, indeed, they are revealed by God immediately, as those things which were revealed by the apostles and prophets, while to some they are proposed by God in sending preachers of the faith.[55]

[53] S.T. II.II.1.9c.

[54] S.T. II.II.2.6c.

[55] S.T. II.II.6.1c. Here, I will not engage in a discussion of the nature of immediate (i.e., personal) revelation. Nevertheless, I would suggest that such revelation is not accomplished independently of the historical particularity of the individual. For example, the confession of St. Peter in Matt 16:18 (despite Jesus' insistence that "flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven") was still dependant on both Peter's particular experience of the Incarnate Word, as well as his entire psycholinguistic development up to that point. Hence, even immediate revelation is accomplished in cooperation with the symbolic.

For those of us not numbered among the apostles and the prophets, God chooses to communicate with us through the mediation of preachers (broadly understood as anyone who proclaims the Word of God). Our participation in the Divine Nature through the faithful act of belief is essentially tied to evangelization.[56] Human action, then, in all of its historical and embodied particularity, is rightfully described as the *beginning* of participation in the Divine Nature insofar as through the formulation and proclamation of symbols and signs (i.e., the complex objects of faith) human action mediates the presence of God that is a prerequisite for faithful belief in God. With this role of evangelization in mind, we finally turn to an explicit examination of the relationship between belief and sacramental signification.

While I leave a more in-depth discussion of the role of the Eucharist in the graced movement of the Image of God until chapter 5, I must briefly return here to the material from the first chapter regarding sacramental signification. I pointed out that, for Aquinas, sacramental causality is a function of signification.[57] In other words, if we want to know what it means to say that sacraments cause grace, we must first understand the relationship between grace and signification. As I noted, sacramental signification provides faith with its object.[58] Specifically, the sacraments offer us knowledge of Christ's passion (the cause of our sanctification), grace and virtues (the form of our sanctification), and eternal life (the end of our sanctification).[59] Sacraments are said to have sacramental signification insofar as they signify (i.e., offer us knowledge of) the cause, form, and end of our sanctification. Keeping in mind that the object of faith, when considered from the perspective of the believer, is "something complex by way of a proposition," we can see that sacramental signification makes the object of faith present to the believer. Put differently, sacramental signification manifests the known to the knower in a mode

[56] I will refrain from a discussion of the role of faith in revelation. Suffice it to say that the external act of faith (i.e., confession) is the manifestation of the evangelization whereby the signs and symbols of faith are formulated and proclaimed.

[57] Cf. chap. 1.III.

[58] It should be noted that this is obviously not a role exclusively held by the sacraments of the New Law. The object of faith is free to be present to the human intellect in any way God deems fitting.

[59] S.T. III.60.3c.

proper to the human intellect.[60] While Aquinas's treatment of the virtue of faith tends to emphasize the role of words in belief, he clearly has a place for nonverbal communication. For example, in the first question of the *Secunda Secundae*, Aquinas tells us that "things concerning Christ's human nature, and the sacraments of the Church, or any creatures whatever, come under faith, in so far as by them we are directed to God, and inasmuch as we assent to them on account of the Divine Truth." By means of sacramental signification, the sacraments propose the complex objects of faith to us so that, through the mediation of their words, matter, and actions (i.e., sacramental signs), we might believe in God as the source of our salvation.

In this brief section I have tried to gesture toward the importance of sacramental signification for our participation in the Divine Nature. Quite clearly, these preliminary considerations demand further exploration. Specifically, how does belief in God relate to love of God? If it is through both knowledge and love of God that we are said to participate in the Divine Nature, then speaking of belief is not sufficient for understanding grace. With these questions in mind, the following chapter will provide a more in-depth discussion of what it means to say that we participate in the Divine Nature through faith and charity. Specifically, we will take up the question of the relationship between salvation and grace, describing that relationship in terms of justification and sanctification. Those considerations will allow us to develop an understanding of the spiritual life as a process of striving to increase in charity. The purpose of this section, though, in addition to an explanation of belief and signification, has been to show that, even when considered solely in terms of belief (i.e., the

[60] Again, grace does not add potency to human nature, thereby making us capable of knowing in superhuman modes. One might argue that Aquinas defends the reality of immediately acquired knowledge (i.e., knowledge gained independently of synthesis and analysis) in his discussion of prophecy. Most notably, in S.T. II.II.171.1.ad4 Aquinas says "It is requisite to prophecy that the intention of the mind be raised to the perception of Divine things." However, insofar as "this raising of the intention is brought about by the motion of the Holy Ghost," Aquinas is not postulating a different mode of knowing. Rather, the elevation of the mind is the inspiration (*inspiratio*) of the Holy Spirit that allows the prophet to apprehend revealed truths. This inspiration is clearly distinct from the revelation "in quo perficitur prophetia." All this is to say that grace perfects our nature insofar as it moves us to more perfectly know in a mode proper to human beings. We must still "know the truth by synthesis and analysis."

internal act of faith), participating in the Divine Nature is an embodied and historical event. In short, this section reiterates the thesis of the whole chapter: grace cannot be separated from particular human action.

IV. Conclusion: Cooperative Participation

In this chapter I focused primarily on grace as participation and the role of belief and signification in that participation. In the previous chapter, I pointed out that if grace is "nothing else than a participated likeness in the Divine Nature," then understanding the role of belief and signification in that participation is necessary for properly understanding the role of the sacraments in our lives. This grammar of grace provides us with a particular way of talking about God's relationship with humankind. Based on the location of the treatise on grace within the larger structure of the *Summa*, we must say that any use of the word "grace" entails a reference to God's effect on the active spiritual life. As such, this grammar of grace emphasizes authentic human action. If grace is "nothing else than a participation in the divine life," then it is a cooperative participation insofar as it is inherently connected to human action. What exactly *cooperative* participation looks like is a question I leave for the following two chapters to flesh out. In this chapter, I treated the graced action of the intellectual power: faithful belief. The following chapter will examine what it means to say that grace acts upon the appetitive power of the will.

At the heart of this chapter is a desire to avoid the reification of grace. Conforming to God's will is not the same as being the next domino in a sequence begun by God. Rather, grace is a dynamic relationship between God and Creation. I use the word "dynamic" because human action is essential to grace. "What is substantially in God becomes accidental in the soul participating in Divine goodness."[61]

Perhaps the clearest condemnation of what we might call a "grace productionist" view of the sacraments in which grace is reified into a created substance is the following passage from the treatise on grace: "No accident is called being as if it had being, but because by

[61] S.T. I.II.110.2.ad2.

it something is; hence it is said to belong to a being rather than to be a being."[62] God has being and, in a different way, humans have being. Grace, on the other hand, does not have being but belongs to human beings when God wills what is good for them. When God wills the good for humankind, our share in the Image of God becomes active as, through knowledge and love of God, we conform to and are formed by grace. By that conformity we are said to cooperatively participate in the Divine Nature.

Grace, then, begins with human action (the historically mediated proclamation of revelation) and culminates in human action (the active participation that constitutes the embodied spiritual life).[63] Simultaneously, grace begins with divine action (the self-communication of God) and culminates in divine action (the operation of the Holy Spirit within us). "When the same effect is attributed to a natural cause and to the divine power, it is not as though the effect were produced partly by God and partly by the natural agent: but the whole effect is produced by both, though in different ways, as the same effect is attributed wholly to the instrument, and wholly also to the principal agent."[64] Cooperative participation is embodied. The spiritual life in which we journey toward God is as corporeal as it is spiritual. Our participation in the Divine Nature is not a mystical union that occurs on some spiritual plane of existence, separate from the finite and messy world of created matter. Through Christ, God chose to live with us, and, through the Holy Spirit, God chooses to live within us.

> *By this we know that we abide in him and he in us,*
> *because he has given us of his Spirit.*
>
> —1 John 4:13

[62] S.T. I.II.110.2.ad3.

[63] For example, when discussing infant baptism, Aquinas points out that grace is present only as habit, not as action, until later cooperation; cf. S.T. III.69.6.

[64] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* III.70.8.

CHAPTER THREE

The Theological Virtues Founding the Embodied Spiritual Life

We love, because he first loved us.

—1 John 4:19

In the previous chapter I examined how Aquinas describes the embodied spiritual life in terms of grace. The present chapter will examine how he describes that same spiritual life in terms of the theological virtues. This chapter is meant to show that when Aquinas writes about acts of charity he is using a grammar of virtue to describe the embodied spiritual life. As Aquinas describes them, acts of charity are also the Holy Spirit's activity in us (or, better, the Holy Spirit moving us from within). In the previous chapter we saw that Aquinas also uses a grammar of grace to describe the embodied spiritual life insofar as grace is the Holy Spirit actualizing our share in the Image of God. Hence, Aquinas is employing two grammars to describe the same reality. As I will point out, grace is not exhausted by the concept of charity and the acts formed by charity; the distinction between grace and the virtues is not merely a rhetorical distinction. This grammar of virtue allows Aquinas to move away from the general grammar of grace to a more particular grammar of virtue. As Aquinas says in the preface to the *Secunda Secundae*, general considerations of morality are less helpful insofar as human actions are always concrete and particular.[1] Returning once again to the questions from our first

[1] S.T. II.II. Preface.

chapter, I will focus on how, according to Aquinas, we become subjects of the theological virtues and what effects those virtues have in our lives. Insofar as I can retrieve the answers to these questions from the *Secunda Secundae*, I will have retrieved a grammar of virtue that can be used to describe the embodied spiritual life.

While this chapter will treat all three of the theological virtues, its primary focus will be the virtue of charity. The overarching thesis of the chapter is that the spiritual life of the wayfaring Christian is the process of striving to increase in charity. In order to support this thesis, I will proceed in four sections. First, I will describe the theological virtues by focusing on their roles in moving the intellect and the will. It is due to these roles that the theological virtues are said to be necessary for our participation in the Divine Nature. The second and third sections will describe the roles of the theological virtues in soteriological terms. Namely, the second section will describe the theological virtues from the perspective of their generation. That is to say, we will examine their role in our justification. The third section, then, will describe the theological virtues from the perspective of their perfection. That is to say, we will examine their role in our sanctification. The purpose of focusing our attention on soteriological language is to emphasize the fact that our salvation (i.e., our justification and sanctification) is the process of growing in union with God. Sanctification will be presented as the process of moving from union with God to deeper union with God. Finally, by way of transition to the fourth chapter, I will suggest that this retrieved grammar of the theological virtues implies a pneumatological soteriology of *theosis*.

I. The Theological Virtues: Orders and Degrees

To move from the natural aptitude for knowing and loving God (i.e., the image of creation) to actually and habitually knowing and loving God (i.e., the image of re-creation) is the movement that Aquinas refers to as participation in the Divine Nature.[2] The previous chapter was devoted to describing grace in terms of this movement. Participation in the Divine Nature (i.e., grace) is God's movement of the intellect to knowledge of God and of the will to love of God. The

[2] Cf. chap. 2.II.

present section will be an examination of the roles the theological virtues play in this participation.

1. Faith, Hope, and Charity

In order to be moved toward their final end, the intellect and the will need assistance. Insofar as the purpose of a virtue is to incline a power to move from potency to act,[3] the theological virtues move the intellect and the will toward the final end.[4] As was stated in the previous chapter, the supernatural character of the final end renders our natural principles impotent to attain the final end.[5] "Hence, it is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness."[6] The three theological virtues that constitute these supernatural principles are called faith, hope, and charity (*fides*, *spes*, *et caritas*). A brief description of these virtues is offered in an article where Aquinas examines whether faith, hope, and charity are rightly called theological virtues:

> First, as regards the intellect, man receives certain supernatural principles, which are held by means of a Divine light: these are the articles of faith, about which is faith. Secondly, the will is directed to this end, both as to that end as something attainable—and this pertains to hope—and as to a certain spiritual union, whereby the will is, so to speak, transformed into that end—and this belongs to charity.[7]

Hence, faith is the virtue that perfects the intellect with respect to its movement (i.e., assent of belief) toward its final end: First Truth.[8] Hope is the virtue that perfects the will with respect to its attainable yet unattained final end: Eternal Happiness.[9] Finally, charity is the

[3] S.T. I.II.55.1c.
[4] S.T. I.II.62.1c.
[5] Cf. chap. 2.II.1.
[6] S.T. I.II.62.1c.
[7] S.T. I.II.62.3c.
[8] Cf. S.T. II.II.1.1.
[9] Cf. S.T. II.II.17.2.

virtue that perfects the will with respect to its attained final end: the spiritual union of friendship with God. Insofar as these virtues move the intellect and the will toward God, they are rightfully called the supernatural principles through which the image of creation is actualized into the image of re-creation. Put differently, the theological virtues are rightfully called principles of our participation in the Divine Nature.

Clearly, much more could be said about these virtues individually. Rather than isolate each virtue for description, however, I will describe them in terms of their relationship to one another. Specifically, I will emphasize their constitutive dependency. The purpose of this method is to avoid the reification of these virtues in the same way that the previous chapter sought to avoid the reification of types of grace (e.g., cooperative and operative). In the end, describing the complex activity of the theological virtues should be seen as a description of the simple activity of the Holy Spirit in the human person, just as any description of various types of grace is a description of the Holy Spirit's single action in us.

2. Orders of Generation and Perfection

In describing the relationship between the theological virtues, Aquinas utilizes the term "order." In question 62.4 of the *Prima Secundae*, Aquinas distinguishes between two orders in the theological virtues: the order of generation (*ordine generationis*) and the order of perfection (*ordine perfectionis*).

In the order of generation, faith precedes hope, and hope precedes charity. It is important to emphasize the fact that the order of generation is a description of the *acts* of the virtue.[10] In other words, "generation" is meant only chronologically with regard to the *acts* of faith, hope, and charity (i.e., belief, hope, and friendship, respectively) and not with respect to the presence of the virtue in the subject.[11] Aquinas says quite clearly that the theological virtues are all infused simulta-

[10] S.T. I.II.62.4c.

[11] For example, when discussing infant baptism, Aquinas points out that grace is present only as habit (i.e., infused theological virtues), not as action, until later cooperation; cf. S.T. III.69.6.

neously.[12] We will return to a discussion of how Aquinas is using the word "infusion" later in this chapter. For now I will focus on what the following description of the order of generation tells us about the relationship between the intellect and the will.

> For the movement of the appetite cannot tend to anything, either by hoping or loving, unless that thing be apprehended by the sense or by the intellect. Now it is by faith that the intellect apprehends the object of hope and love. Hence in the order of generation, faith precedes hope and charity. In like manner a man loves a thing because he apprehends it as his good. Now from the very fact that a man hopes to be able to obtain some good through someone, he looks on the man in whom he hopes as a good of his own. Hence for the very reason that a man hopes in someone, he proceeds to love him: so that in the order of generation, hope precedes charity as regards their respective acts.[13]

Faith precedes hope and charity because faith is the virtue that allows us to know God as the object of hope and charity. Hence, Aquinas cites Augustine: "Love ranks above knowledge in moving, but knowledge precedes love in attaining: *for naught is loved saved what is known*."[14] The knowledge of faith (i.e., belief) presents the will with an object toward which to move. Insofar as God is habitually and actually known through faith, hope is able to move toward God as attainable (but unattained) Eternal Happiness. In other words, hope allows the will to desire God as The Good. Insofar as hope desires God as a good to be attained, charity is able to recognize and love God as a good in and of God's self. Hence, hope leads to the love of charity. The order of generation clearly shows that, regarding the acts of the theological virtues, the actual movement of the intellect toward God must chronologically precede the actual movement of will in hope and love. Again, this is different from saying that the presence of faith in the subject precedes the presence of hope and charity.

In the previous chapter, I stopped short of explicitly discussing the order of generation insofar as I did not consider the relations of the virtues within an individual. Rather, the chapter looked indirectly at

[12] S.T. I.II.62.4c.
[13] S.T. I.II.62.4c.
[14] S.T. I.II.3.4.ad4.

the order of generation insofar as it considered faith alone; specifically, we discussed the role of belief and signification in our participation in the Divine Nature. The act of faith (i.e., belief) comes first. As we saw, in coming to belief, faith must be provided with the objects of revelation (i.e., the articles of faith). Faith then moves the intellect to assent. At this point there is a union with God as the True. Insofar as the act of belief is the beginning of our *actualized* participation in the Divine Nature, we are describing faith as it fits in the order of generation. Through the act of faith, the intellect provides the will with an object toward which it moves. So, in the order of generation, we have a description of the will's dependence on the intellect.

After describing the order of generation, Aquinas briefly addresses the order of perfection: "In the order of perfection, charity precedes faith and hope: because both faith and hope are quickened by charity, and receive from charity their full complement as virtues. For thus charity is the mother and the root of all the virtues, inasmuch as it is the form of them all."[15] Here, I must take the time to offer an initial explanation of charity's formative role insofar as it elucidates the relationship between the intellect and the will. Charity "directs the acts of all other virtues to the last end, and which, consequently, also gives the form to all other acts of virtue: and it is precisely in this sense that charity is called the form of the virtues, for these are called virtues in relation to 'informed' acts."[16] Charity is the virtue whereby the human person desires to be virtuous for the sake of deepening friendship with God. By moving the will to love God, charity is the virtue through which we strive to be united to God *as a friend*. Put differently, when charity forms faith, the movement of the intellect depends on the movement of the will. Or, in the words of Aquinas: "Charity is called the mother of the other virtues, because, by commanding them, it conceives the acts of the other virtues, by the desire of the last end."[17] Aquinas uses the word *vivificare* ("to make live," often translated as "quicken") to describe the relationship between charity and the other virtues. Friendship with God gives life to all other virtues, insofar as all actions are done for the sake of friendship

[15] S.T. I.II.62.4c.
[16] S.T. II.II.23.8c.
[17] S.T. II.II.23.8.ad3.

with God. We will return to the formative role of charity in much greater length in the following chapter. For now, I simply wish to emphasize the fact that, in the order of perfection, we have a description of the intellect's dependence on the will.

By employing these two orders, Aquinas is maintaining a tension. In the order of generation, the intellect moves the will: faith generates charity. In the order of perfection, the will moves the intellect: charity perfects faith. Rather than simply describing a five-step process from faith to charity and back again, it seems to me that Aquinas is maintaining a tension insofar as he is using these two orders to describe the relationship of codependence that exists between the will and the intellect.

As moral theologian and Thomistic scholar James F. Keenan has pointed out, one of the great problems of scholastic thought was the relationship between the will and the intellect.[18] In question 9 of the *Prima Secundae*, Aquinas maintains the will's autonomy by naming God as the final cause of the will's movement. Or, as Keenan puts it, "by God's creative act, this inclination [toward God] is already in the will, and thus the final cause is already in the will prior to any presentation of an object by reason."[19] In an article where Aquinas is treating the relationship between faith and charity, he notes that, unlike prudence, which "moderates the appetitive movements pertaining to the moral virtues, faith does not moderate the appetitive movement tending to God, which movement belongs to the theological virtues: it only shows the object. And this appetitive movement towards its object surpasses human knowledge."[20] As we will see in our examination of justification, the autonomy of the will and its relationship to the intellect is described only with difficulty. By using these two orders of generation and perfection, however, Aquinas is able to speak about the relationship between the intellect and the will in a manner that maintains the tension of their codependence in their movement toward God. In considering whether faith is the first of the theological virtues, Aquinas makes it clear that the order of generation cannot be isolated from the order of perfection:

[18] James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's* Summa Theologiae (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1992). See, in particular, chaps. 2–3.

[19] Ibid., 44.

[20] S.T. I.II.66.6.ad1.

"Faith without charity cannot be the foundation of the spiritual life."[21] In this way, it is not faith alone that begins the spiritual life but perfected faith on which the edifice of the spiritual life stands. In this life, the theological virtues simply cannot be separated. Insofar as the theological virtues are considered in terms of the spiritual life, they are essentially relational.

3. Three Degrees of Charity

As the principles of our participation in the Divine Nature, all three theological virtues unite the human person to God. However, the unions created through faith and hope are distinct from the union of charity insofar as faith and hope "adhere to God as to a principle wherefrom certain things accrue to us," whereas "charity makes us adhere to God for his own sake, uniting our minds to God by the emotion of love."[22] Hence, the union of charity is said to be more perfect than the union of faith or hope. While charity is a union attained, however, that does not mean that the union is static. On the contrary, according to Aquinas there are three degrees (*gradus*) of charity.[23] For Aquinas, the spiritual life is a dynamic process of striving to deepen one's union with God.

At the outset, we must note that the three degrees of charity are rhetorically attributed so as to emphasize the dynamic nature of charity. The degrees are not to be understood as levels of God's love for us. Rather, as Aquinas puts it, "the diverse degrees of charity are distinguished according to the different pursuits to which man is brought by the increase of charity."[24] As charity increases (i.e., as friendship with God deepens), that friendship will manifest itself in various ways depending on its depth. Aquinas describes these "different pursuits" as follows:

> For at first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity: this concerns beginners, in whom charity has to be fed or fostered lest it be destroyed: in the second place

[21] S.T. II.II.4.7.ad4.
[22] S.T. II.II.17.6.c.
[23] S.T. II.II.24.9sc.
[24] S.T. II.II.24.9.c.

> man's chief pursuit is to aim at progress in good, and this is the pursuit of the proficient, whose chief aim is to strengthen their charity by adding to it: while man's third pursuit is to aim chiefly at union with and enjoyment of God: this belongs to the perfect who "desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ."[25]

As we will see in the following two sections, infusion of theological virtue does not make one perfect (or proficient) in charity. In most human lives, charity is received by patiently struggling to deepen our union with God. As Aquinas points out, the primary pursuit of a beginner in charity is to resist sin. Those who are proficient in charity, on the other hand, strive to increase in charity. As with any habit, the strength of the inclination toward its end is subject to change. We will examine the process of increasing in charity more closely in our third section. For now, I want to emphasize that Aquinas's description of the three degrees of charity is meant as a description of charity seeking increase in charity, of union seeking deeper union.

This section's examination of the orders and degrees of the theological virtues is meant to emphasize the fact that Aquinas sees the spiritual life as a *dynamic process*. Hence, the Christian is called a "wayfarer." In order to see how the theological virtues (and charity in particular) relate to the embodied spiritual life, I now turn to a consideration of salvation. In the following sections we will see that processing through the degrees of charity can be described in terms of the generation of the theological virtues and in terms of the perfection of the theological virtues.

II. Falling in Love with God[26]

To talk about salvation in terms of the spiritual life, we return once again to Aquinas's discussion of the Image of God found in the *Prima*

[25] Ibid.

[26] Before I enter into a soteriological discussion, I would like to address the glaring lacuna that will mark the next two sections: there will be no mention of Christ. That discussion is in chap. 5 when the grammars of grace and virtue that are retrieved from the *Secunda Pars* will be connected with the Christology and sacramental theology of the *Tertia Pars*. Focusing on these grammars of grace and virtue before treating Christology ensures that Aquinas's implicit pneumatology (i.e., the theology of divine action that undergirds his discussion of grace and the theological virtues) will not be subsumed by his much more explicit Christology. This will ensure that any

Pars. There we saw a threefold Image of God.[27] As I pointed out in the previous chapter, the image of re-creation is the active Image of God that manifests the spiritual life. As I will argue throughout the remainder of this chapter, speaking about justification and sanctification are two different ways of describing the relationship between the theological virtues and their effects on the spiritual life. Speaking in terms of justification is an archeological (as opposed to teleological) way of speaking about the theological virtues that generate us as subjects of the theological virtues. Put differently, we fall in love with God.

1. Justification

In an article where Aquinas treats the distinction between grace and the theological virtues, he succinctly sums up his theology of justification: "It is in respect of receiving this [divine] nature that we are said to be born again sons of God."[28] To share in the image of re-creation (i.e., to be a born-again child of God) is to participate in the Divine Nature. Here, I will examine how Aquinas describes this participation in terms of being generated as a subject of the theological virtues.

In question 113 of the treatise on grace, Aquinas discusses justification as an effect of grace. The term "justification" is used in order to denote "a certain rectitude of order in the interior disposition of man in so far as what is highest in man is subject to God."[29] This reordering of the human mind is a matter of "movement [*motus*] from one contrary to the other, and thus justification implies a transmutation from the state of injustice to the aforesaid state of justice."[30] As Aquinas puts it, "The order of nature can only be restored, i.e. man's will can only be subject to God, when God draws man's will to Himself."[31] Ultimately, this reordering of human nature away from sin

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interpretation of the Christocentrism in the *Tertia Pars* does not degenerate into Christomonism. Again, the relationship between the *Secunda Pars*'s pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* and the christological soteriologies of the *Tertia Pars* will be treated at length in chap. 5.

[27] S.T. I.93.4c.

[28] S.T. I.II.110.3.c.

[29] S.T. I.II.113.1c.

[30] Ibid.

[31] S.T. I.II. 109.7c.

and toward God is called justification. At this point, it is worth noting that speaking in terms of reorientation frames justification as a relationship. Any understanding of justification as an ontological status must be conceived as a function of relationship with God. Hence, as I will now show, speaking of justification as the infusion of a habitual gift is always a description of participation in the Divine Nature (i.e., the indwelling of the Holy Spirit).

Aquinas lists four things required for justification: "the infusion of grace, the movement of the free-will towards God by faith, the movement of the free-will [away from] sin, and the remission of sins [*culpae*]."[32] Aquinas is clear that the remission of sins is called a requirement for justification only insofar as "every movement has its species from its term."[33] Put differently, rather than being the final step leading to justification, the remission of sins *is* justification.[34] Regarding the role of the free will in justification, Aquinas says that the movement of free will toward sin is detestation of that which is contrary to God. Likewise, the movement of free will toward God by faith is love for God.[35] The free will's movement away from sin and toward God is the reorientation/transmutation of the human mind toward its Final End. Here, we must pause to highlight the role of the free will in this process. According to Aquinas, "God does not justify us without ourselves, because whilst we are being justified we consent to God's justification by a movement of our free-will."[36] This consent (*consentimus*) is constituted by our detestation of sin and desire for God.[37] We must ask, then, what is it that moves the free will?

Hence, we come to the first of Aquinas's prerequisites for our justification: the infusion of grace.[38] Here, we are primarily concerned with the infusion of the habitual gift (i.e., the theological virtues). We must take time to note, however, that "infusion of grace" denotes

[32] S.T. I.II.113.6c. The English translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province renders *motus liberi arbitrii in peccatum* as "the movement of the free-will towards sin." However, I have chosen to substitute "towards" with the term "away from" to make the use of the orientational metaphor more consistent.

[33] S.T. I.II.113.6.ad1.

[34] S.T. I.II.113.1.sc.

[35] S.T. I.II.1113.5c.

[36] S.T. I.II.111.2.ad2.

[37] S.T. I.II.113.7.ad1.

[38] S.T. I.II.113.7c.

more than the gift of the theological virtues. In the previous chapter, I pointed out that Aquinas speaks of God's help as twofold: as a habitual gift and as God's moving us to act. "First, [grace can be spoken of as] a habitual gift whereby corrupted human nature is healed, and after being healed is lifted up so as to work deeds meritorious of everlasting life."[39] This habitual gift heals our corrupted nature (i.e., reorientation, transmutation, justification) and aids that newly justified nature in actively moving toward its final end. Second, in addition to the language of "habitual gift," we can speak of grace in terms of God moving us to act.[40] This second way of speaking about grace is first discussed in relation to *preparation* for receiving the infused habitual gift whereby we are justified. In article 6 of question 109, Aquinas points out that "every form requires a disposition." Speaking of this prerequisite disposition, Aquinas is very clear that this predisposition must be accomplished by the free will of the person receiving the habitual gift. He is equally clear, however, that "free-will can only be turned to God when God turns it."[41] In an article where Aquinas discusses whether faith is the first of the virtues, he says that "some act of the will is required before faith, but not an act of the will quickened by charity."[42] As I pointed out above, this noncharitable act of the will is attributed to grace, because, "by God's creative act, this inclination [toward God] is already in the will, and thus the final cause is already in the will prior to any presentation of an object by reason."[43] In short, grace prepares the human mind for the theological virtues insofar as God has oriented the free will toward its Final End. Being so graciously predisposed, the powers of the mind (i.e., the intellect and will) are capable of receiving the theological virtues.

The first aspect of "the infusion of grace" necessary for justification, then, is the preparatory movement of the free will by grace. I turn now to the second aspect of this necessary "infusion of grace:" the habitual gift. Here, I want to call attention to the fact that Aquinas uses the virtue of faith to describe the free will's movement toward God. After establishing the necessary role of the free will in justification, Aquinas

[39] S.T. I.II.109.9c.
[40] Ibid.
[41] S.T. I.II.109.6.ad1.
[42] S.T. II.II.4.7.ad5.
[43] Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 44.

points out that the mind's turning toward God is through an act of faith.[44] This is not a claim that excludes other acts.[45] However, when we recall that, in the order of generation, the act of faith is prior to the acts of hope and charity, we see why Aquinas describes the justifying movement of the free will toward God in terms of faith. The movement of the free will toward God must be toward God, not as toward an object known through natural means, but as toward the "object of beatitude."[46] In other words, belief in the historically mediated articles of faith (specifically, the Mystery of Christ[47]) must be the foundation for the free will's movement toward God. Hence, when Aquinas says that the free will moves toward God "by faith" (*per fidem*), he is emphasizing the role of the symbols and articles of faith through which God's revelation is known by the human mind. While the movement of the free will is accomplished by the infusion of all the theological virtues (a single gift), Aquinas's emphasis on the foundation of faith betrays a preoccupation with the operation of the exterior sources of our justification. In short, as far as I can tell, speaking of salvation in terms of justification is a way of speaking about salvation with the order of generation in mind. *Converto*,[48] *sano*,[49] and *infundo*[50] are metaphors about beginning/inauguration. The habitual gift is infused, and we are generated as subjects of the theological virtues: that is, Christian wayfarers. Hence, as with the order of generation, when speaking of justification, faith is the theological virtue that takes the place of (grammatical) primacy.

2. Infusion

I now highlight the fact that justification is no more a moment in the past than creation is a moment in the past. As we saw in the previous chapter's discussion of Aquinas's treatment of God's creative

[44] S.T. I.II.113.4c.

[45] Cf. S.T. I.II.113.4.ad1. The acts of hope and charity are necessary for justification. The movement of the free will is still an act of charity. However, Aquinas is emphasizing the dependence of this charitable movement on faith's movement of the intellect.

[46] S.T. I.II.113.4.ad2.

[47] Cf. S.T. I.II.113.4.ad3.

[48] Cf. S.T. I.II.109.6.c.

[49] Cf. S.T. I.II.109.9.c.

[50] Cf. S.T. I.II.110.3.c.

act, participation is seen as a relationship between Creation and its source or beginning (*arche*). To reinvoke Torrell's words: "One should not imagine creation as an isolated act that occurred in a distant past; rather, it is a present reality."[51] To be is to participate in God. In other words, the ontology of a creature is always actively relational. The same is true of justification. Justification is an archeological way of speaking about the generation of the theological virtues in the human person. When Aquinas speaks about how faith leads to hope, which leads to charity, he is speaking about the (re-)creation of a Christian wayfarer. Hence, Aquinas says that, as with the act of creation, "God is always working man's justification."[52] The ontology of a justified person is always actively relational. When he says that "the justification of the ungodly is not successive,"[53] we must be careful not to interpret *non est successiva* as "is completed in a single moment." Rather, according to Aquinas, "the common and wonted course of justification is that God moves the soul interiorly and that man is converted to God [i.e., the image of re-creation], first by an imperfect conversion, that it may afterwards become perfect."[54] What is meant by *non est successiva* is that God's action in us is simple.

Hence, the four prerequisites for justification are all ways of describing God's efficacious love for the human person. When describing the remission of sins, Aquinas says that "sin is remitted to us, when God is at peace with us, and this peace consists in the love whereby God loves us."[55] Grace, the movement of the free will, and the forgiveness of sins are all descriptions of God's efficacious love. To be justified (i.e., to become a subject of the theological virtues) is to be loved into loving God.

When speaking about the generation of subjects of the theological virtues, we are ultimately speaking about the gift of Christian identity. Hence, the habitual gift whereby we are justified is the gift of self. The movement of our intellect and our will toward God is tantamount to God holding us in Christian existence; the image of re-creation is

[51] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Aquinas'* Summa*: Background, Structure, and Reception*, trans. Benedict M. Guevin (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 24.

[52] S.T. II.II.4.4.ad3.

[53] S.T. II.II.113.8.c.

[54] S.T. I.II.113.10.c.

[55] S.T. I.II.113.2c.

synonymous with being a born-again Child of God. Speaking about justification is a way of speaking about the role of the theological virtues in the spiritual life. Specifically, justification is a way of speaking about this role in terms of the source of our subjectivity. As such, speaking about justification is an archeological way of speaking about the generation of theological virtues in the human person. We are saved when God turns us toward God's self with an offer of friendship. We fall in love with the One who loves us.

To close this section on justification, I would like to briefly point out what it means to say that the theological virtues are a *single* habitual gift. An important word to understand when describing the generation of the theological virtues is "infusion" (*infusionem*). The first and most crucial thing to understand about infusion is that it is less a noun and more an adjective. By this I mean that the metaphor of "infusion" that Aquinas uses to describe the generation of the theological virtues is always used as a way of distinguishing them from the acquisition of human virtues that is connatural to human nature. For example, when discussing the cause of charity's presence in us, Aquinas says that, due to our lack of natural capacity to acquire the virtue of charity, it is in us "by the infusion of the Holy Ghost, Who is the love of the Father and the Son, and the participation of Whom in us is created charity."[56] Similarly, when Aquinas is speaking of the generation of faith, he says that the movement of belief "must needs accrue to him from some supernatural principle moving him inwardly; and this is God."[57] "Infusion" is a word used by Aquinas to deny the natural and affirm the supernatural source of the theological virtues. Put differently, infusion is not only a description of *how* the theological virtues (i.e., the habitual gifts) are given. Rather, infusion is meant to signify that the theological virtues are a gratuitous gift. It is crucial to realize that "infusion" is not invoked to signify an unmediated, ahistorical, instantaneous divine intervention, as much as it is meant to signify the primacy of divine action. It is even more crucial to resist the temptation to use words like "inject" or "absorb" as synonyms for infusion.

Why is this important? Because we must avoid seeing our salvation as a passive relationship between a moved object and an efficient

[56] S.T. II.II.24.2.c.
[57] S.T. II.II.6.1.c.

cause.[58] This perception leads to seeing the spiritual life through a deistic lens whereby God makes the clock (injects us with theological virtues) and watches us go. Rather, the infusion of the theological virtues needs to be understood as the formally effective indwelling of the Holy Spirit who is perpetually actualizing our share in the Image of God. Hence, the spiritual life is seen as a dynamic and cooperative process of increasing in charity. As we will see, to say that we have the theological virtues is to say that the Holy Spirit is present within us. Hence, the habitual gift is not a threefold object (faith, hope, and charity) given by God to the human person. The habitual gift, then, is the single gift of a dynamic relationship insofar as it is God's participation in the human person. Put differently, we fall in love with God.

III. Growing in Love for God

I now turn to a consideration of the role the theological virtues play in our sanctification. According to Aquinas, "The special sanctification of every creature consists in resting in God [*in Deo requiescit*]."[59] Simply put, to say that something rests in God is to assert the existence of a union between the creature and God. Because I am primarily concerned with the theological virtues, I will focus my attention on what it means to say that a *human person* rests in God. What follows is an examination of this union that constitutes holiness.

1. Sanctification

To begin, I would like to point out that, for Aquinas, both justification and sanctification are about being made holy (*sanctus*). Justification makes us pleasing to God, heals us, converts us, reorients us, etc. Nevertheless, these ways of speaking about the *generation* of the theological virtues places an emphasis on being (becoming a subject as opposed to operating as that subject). On the other hand, we can also speak of being made holy in a way that emphasizes the *operation* of our healed nature. From the outset, I want to be clear that justification and sanctification are two ways of speaking about the same thing.

[58] Cf. S.T. II.II.23.2c.
[59] S.T. I.73.3c.

While justification focuses on the *state* of the healed mind as a *consequence* of union with God, sanctification focuses on the *movement* of the healed mind that *constitutes* union with God. The difference between sanctification and justification is a difference in emphasis: justification emphasizes *attaining* union (i.e., generation of the theological virtues) and sanctification emphasizes *deepening* union (i.e., perfection of the theological virtues).

Obviously, these are not mutually exclusive. As we have seen, justification involves reference to the movement of the free will. The *acts* of faith and charity are intrinsic to justification. To believe in God, to desire God, and to detest sin are all part of justification. The way Aquinas chooses to speak about justification, however, tends to emphasize the orientation (i.e., the being) of the generated subject (i.e., the Christian wayfarer). As we have seen, Aquinas prefers the language of healing, conversion, and reorientation when describing justification. On the other hand, it is also possible to speak about the role of the theological virtues in a way that emphasizes their operation. It is the thesis of the current section that such a grammatical shift constitutes a shift from speaking about salvation primarily in terms of justification, to speaking of salvation primarily in terms of sanctification. As I will argue, speaking in terms of sanctification is a teleological way of speaking about the operation of the theological virtues whereby we grow in love for God.

As I pointed out in the previous section, being generated as a subject of the theological virtues is tantamount to falling in love with God. To understand how this love for God grows, we must first say something about the union that constitutes our love for God. According to Aquinas, the love of friendship is "that love which is together with benevolence, when, to wit, we love someone so as to wish good to him."[60] He says that this particular selfless love (i.e., a love not based on concupiscence) is called friendship because it entails a mutuality based on communication. "Since there is a communication between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us, some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication."[61] Recalling the order of generation, the reception of this divine self-communication through friendship depends on

[60] S.T. II.II.23.1c.

[61] Ibid.

the prior acts of faith and hope. Through the habitual gift, we accept the gift of God's self-communication by loving God for God's own sake. Aquinas says that in friendship we love the beloved as another self.[62] The difference between friendship among humans and the friendship of charity is that, with charity, we love God as the Thou of whom we are an image. We love God as a self that is higher than ourselves. Therefore, when, through friendship with God, there is a union of mutual indwelling, our nature is elevated through participation in the Divine Nature. To rightly consider how this union of friendship might grow, we must move from considering it as a static orientation (which is always a conceptual construct) to considering its operation. To that end, we now move to a consideration of action that is done out of this union. Such activity is called the life of holiness. In this actualized union of friendship, we know and love God as the Thou in whose image we exist. In other words, we see God as another self insofar as we learn to see in ourselves an image of divinity.

2. Increase

Once we are generated as subjects of the theological virtues (i.e., once we fall in love with God), that love becomes the source of the steps we take as Christian wayfarers. Put differently, the actions that constitute the spiritual life spring forth from our union with God. According to James Keenan:

> The point of departure, or the *terminus a quo*, for charity distinguishes it from and makes it the most excellent of the theological virtues. Further, the end it seeks, or *terminus ad quem*, because it is not God's truth or a share in happiness, but God's very self, also distinguishes charity from and makes it the most excellent of the theological virtues. Thus, charity seeks its own perfection, that is, actual union, and therefore its relationship to the last end is simple: out of union with the last end, it seeks greater union. Charity seeks no other end.[63]

[62] S.T. I.II.28.1c.

[63] Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 126.

First, I wish to discuss what it means to say that we move "out of union with the last end." Having established what it means to call charity a commanding form of the other virtues, I will then turn to a discussion of what it means to say that charity seeks greater union.

As we saw in the above discussion of the order of perfection, charity is the mother of all other virtues insofar as it "directs the acts of all other virtues to the last end." Aquinas uses the term *impero* (command) to describe this directive relationship. Specifically, Aquinas says that "by commanding them, [charity] conceives the acts of the other virtues, by the desire of the last end."[64] Here, commanding is a function of the will's movement of desire. Hence, through the will's desire, the ends of other virtues (e.g., the knowledge sought by faith) are made proximate to the final end of union with God. Put differently, the objects of all the virtues are desired on account of our desire for God. Hence, the acts of the virtues that are commanded by charity are acts of charity, not essentially, but formally. As the commanding form of the virtues, charity is rightfully called the *terminus a quo* of the spiritual life. It is important to understand this formative role of charity because acts of charity have a vital role in the increase of charity.[65] Before describing the role of charitable acts, however, we must first examine the mode of charity's increase, namely, radication.

In articles 4-7 of the *Secunda Secundae*'s twenty-fourth question, Aquinas discusses the ways in which one can say that charity increases in the human mind. To begin with, Aquinas says that *caritas viae* (the charity of the wayfarer) can increase. He quotes St. Augustine in order to describe how exactly *caritas viae* increases: "For we are called wayfarers by reason of our being on the way to God, Who is the last end of our happiness. On this way we advance as we get nigh to God, Who is approached, 'not by steps of the body but by the affections of the soul': and this approach is the result of charity, since it unites man's mind to God."[66] He goes on to say that this movement toward God by affection is an increase in the "virtual quantity" of

[64] S.T. II.II.23.8.ad3.

[65] In the following chapter, we will return to a discussion of the acts of charity insofar as there is a distinction between elicited and commanded acts of charity. For our purposes in this chapter, however, acts of charity are simply understood as acts that seek the Final End.

[66] S.T. II.II.24.4c.

charity, which increases by the "intensity of the act, namely whether a thing is loved more or less."[67] Simply put, to increase in charity is a matter of loving God more deeply and this deeper love constitutes the steps by which a Christian wayfarer approaches her Final End. Hence, the increase in charity (i.e., growing in love for God) is a teleological movement.

But the question remains: what does it mean to love God more deeply? In article 5, Aquinas eliminates any description of increase by way of addition. Because charity is a single form with a single object, it cannot be increased through addition. Rather, "since charity is an accident, its being is to be in something. So that an essential increase of charity means nothing else but that it is yet more in its subject, which implies a greater radication in its subject."[68] Aquinas goes on to explain this radication in terms of participation: "This is what God does when He increases charity, that is He makes it to have a greater hold on the soul, and the likeness of the Holy Ghost to be more perfectly participated by the soul."[69] Insofar as our participation in the Divine Nature is perfected, we are said to love God more deeply. Hence, Aquinas avers that there is no limit to charity on account of the infinite nature of the Holy Spirit: "For charity itself considered as such has no limit to its increase, since it is a participation of the infinite charity which is the Holy Ghost."[70]

Finally, we must ask what role the acts of charity play in this process of radication. Simply put, because charity is a participation in the Divine Nature, there is no human act (i.e., an act of charity) that can necessitate an increase in charity. The presence and depth of charity is always a gratuitous gift from God.[71] Aquinas says, however, that acts of charity dispose us to such an increase "in so far as one act of charity makes man more ready to act again according to charity, and this readiness increasing, man breaks out into an act of more fervent love, and strives to advance in charity, and then his charity increases actually."[72] We will return to a consideration of this disposi-

[67] S.T. II.II.24.4.ad1.
[68] S.T. II.II.24.4.ad3.
[69] S.T. II.II.24.5.ad3.
[70] S.T. II.II.24.7c.
[71] Cf. S.T. II.II.24.3c.
[72] S.T. II.II.24.6c.

tive role of the acts of charity in the following chapter. For now, I want to highlight the fact that our ability to seek deeper union with God is always a gratuitous gift. We cannot necessitate an actual increase in charity, but when we act out of charity toward deeper union, we necessitate a potential increase in charity. This potential increase in charity is, according to Aquinas, an "advance on the way to God."[73] Hence, as we will see in the following chapter, these dispositive acts of charity constitute the embodied spiritual life insofar as they strive to grow in love for God.

At the beginning of this section I pointed out that, for Aquinas, "the special sanctification of every creature consists in resting in God [*in Deo requiescit*]."[74] This rest is the union of friendship with God (i.e., charity). The more deeply we love God, the more we are said to be at rest in God. Hence, we are sanctified (i.e., we become more holy) insofar as we are actually and habitually in union with God through the movement of our intellect and will. Living a life formed by friendship with God is to live a life of holiness. Or, as Aquinas puts it, "Sanctification is effected by all the virtues, by which also sins are taken away."[75] Holiness, sanctity, friendship, rest, and conformity are all terms to describe the spiritual life in terms of the Christian wayfarer's participation in her Final End. As such, sanctification is a teleological way of describing the role of the theological virtues in the spiritual life. As far as I can tell, speaking of salvation in terms of sanctification is a way of speaking about salvation with the order of perfection in mind.

The purpose of this section has been to show that being perfected as a subject of the theological virtues is tantamount to being sanctified by God. While this section focused on the virtue of charity, this chapter is not called "*Charity* and the Embodied Spiritual Life" because I want to avoid any desire to isolate and separate the theological virtues from one another. Friendship with God, in this life, is accomplished through the *single* habitual gift of the three theological virtues. At no point is a Christian's friendship with God independent of faith and hope. Maintaining the relationships between the theological virtues will prove important when this grammar of virtue is used to

[73] S.T. II.II.24.6.ad3.
[74] S.T. I.73.3c.
[75] S.T. I.II.70.3.ad1.

examine Aquinas's sacramental theology. Specifically, any tendency to isolate and separate the theological virtues easily leads to a separation of the sacraments (e.g., baptism is the sacrament of faith and the Eucharist is the sacrament of charity) that should never be considered apart from one another.

IV. Being Saved by Love

The spiritual life of a Christian wayfarer is a life of dynamic friendship with God. As I have tried to show in this chapter, this dynamic friendship is a participation in the Divine Nature through the movement of the theological virtues. Hence, speaking about the role of the theological virtues in the spiritual life is tantamount to speaking about the salvific action of the Holy Spirit. Insofar as the theological virtues are descriptions of the Spirit's re-creation of our nature through participation, we can say that Aquinas's description of salvation in the *Secunda Pars* is a pneumatological soteriology of *theosis*.

One reason that Aquinas gives for asserting the superiority of charity will prove helpful in understanding the theology that grounds this pneumatological soteriology: "Now in things that are above man, to love them is more excellent than to know them. Because knowledge is perfected by the known being in the knower: whereas love is perfected by the lover being drawn to the beloved. Now that which is above man is more excellent in itself than in man: since a thing is contained according to the mode of the container."[76] Here, Aquinas speaks of charity as the principle by which we are drawn toward God.[77] Similarly, as I pointed out above, Aquinas chooses to describe sanctification as "resting in God." I would submit that when Aquinas describes justification and sanctification in terms of the generation and perfection of the theological virtues, we see a Thomistic account of *theosis*. As a participation in the Divine Nature, the spiritual life that embodies the theological virtues seeks to deepen its participation in the Divine Nature. Hence, the spiritual life is *theosis*.

To clarify this theotic form of participation (and to avoid any tendency to read Aquinas through a Pelagian lens), it is helpful to recall that Aquinas says, "A certain nature may be ascribed to a certain thing

[76] S.T. I.II.66.6.ad1.
[77] Cf. S.T. I.II.109.7c.

. . . by participation, as kindled wood partakes of the nature of fire: and thus, after a fashion, man becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature."[78] Our *theosis* (i.e., the spiritual life we soteriologically refer to as salvation) is a process likened to burning. We cannot set ourselves on fire, and yet firewood exists to burn. We can, however, cooperate with the fire by embracing it. Acts of friendship with God dispose us for a deeper friendship with God.

The life of the theological virtues is rightly described in the soteriological terms of salvation, sanctification, and justification because it is movement toward authentic human existence. Any soteriology must answer the question: From what are we saved? To answer this question using grammars of grace and theological virtue, I would argue that we are saved from nonexistence (i.e., death). Participation in the Divine Nature manifested by the effects of the theological virtues is authentic and active human existence. The gift of faith, hope, and charity is the gift of self. When we (are) move(d) away from sin (i.e., the perceived good of an imperfect end) and toward our Final End, our essence is perfected. We exist more fully as authentic human beings. Sin, on the other hand, is the suicidal undoing of God's creation, deactivating (or, better, refusing) our existence. One might summarize this soteriological description of the theological virtues with the words of Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." In the end, I would argue that this pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* can be summarized by saying that we are loved into existence. And insofar as we cooperate with that love, we are saved by God's love. Put in the simplest terms, "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

> *God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*
>
> —Romans 5:5

[78] S.T. I.II.62.1.ad1.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Moral Virtues Manifesting the Embodied Spiritual Life

I know your works—your love, faith, service, and patient endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first.

—Revelation 2:19

In the first chapter, I pointed out that the embodied spiritual life is not simply a state of having charity. Rather, the spiritual life consists of actions that are formed by charity.[1] As a single body, the Church is not merely a group of unrelated people who are all friends with God. The journey to God that constitutes the spiritual life cannot be properly or adequately understood as the journey of an individual. Rather, by examining moral virtues, we will see that human beings, as a consequence of their embodied nature, necessarily approach God communally. Any description of a personal union with God (i.e., the love of charity) necessarily implies the manifestation of community through the exercise of moral virtue. Simply put, *my* union *with* Christ is inseparable from and ordered toward the *community's* unity *as* Christ. It is this necessary horizontal aspect of the mystical body's unity that constitutes the focus of the present chapter.

The thesis of this chapter, then, is that the moral virtues make up the shape of the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ, as well as the particular shape of the individual paths of Christian wayfarers. In

[1] Cf. chap. 1.V.

the exercise of moral virtue, we find the historical manifestation of charity that, through its extension to others, becomes the gratuitous grace whereby we cooperate in the justification and sanctification of humankind. In order to better understand this crucial role of the moral virtues, this chapter will comprise three main sections. First, I will examine how Aquinas defines moral virtue. Special attention will be given to the codependence of the virtues that makes them *all* necessary forms of any good operation. The second section will consider the relationship between the theological virtues and the moral virtues. By focusing on the dispositive role of moral virtue, we will see that friendship with God is not adequately described solely in terms of charity but necessarily includes actions of moral virtues that serve the individual's relationship with God and with other human beings. Finally, by way of conclusion, I will offer a brief recap of the grammars of grace and virtue carried out in these first four chapters.

I. Moral Virtues

In defining virtue, Aquinas is happy to adopt a definition taken from Peter Lombard's use of St. Augustine: "Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us."[2] In place of the word "quality" (*qualitas*), Aquinas prefers the more specific "habit" (*habitus*). A habit "implies a disposition in relation to a thing's nature, and to its operation or end, by reason of which disposition a thing is well or ill-disposed thereto."[3] As a habit, a virtue is a disposition of human nature (specifically, the human mind) to act toward its end. Hence, the definition uses the phrase "by which we live righteously" because, as Aquinas points out, a virtue is an *operative* habit. That is to say, "the end of virtue . . . is operation."[4] As I have emphasized in the last two chapters, the spiritual life (i.e., living righteously) is habitually and actually knowing and loving God. When Aquinas speaks about virtue, there is an emphasis on the dynamic operation of the human mind, as opposed to its static being. When describing the

[2] S.T. I.II.55.4.arg1.
[3] S.T. I.II.49.4c.
[4] S.T. I.II.55.4c.

spiritual life, the emphasis is placed on operation because "as God's substance is His act, the highest likeness of man to God is in respect of some operation."[5] It is through virtuous operation that a person most fully participates in the Divine Nature.

According to Aquinas, "For a man to do a good deed, it is requisite not only that his reason be well disposed by means of a habit of intellectual virtue; but also that his appetite be well disposed by means of a habit of moral virtue."[6] Hence, in order to understand how a human person carries out such good deeds, we must take the time to understand the relationship between intellectual virtue and moral virtue.

1. The Codependence of Moral Virtues

In an article where Aquinas treats the necessity of prudence, he elaborates on why both moral and intellectual virtues are necessary for good deeds. Here, it will be beneficial to quote Aquinas at length:

> For a good life consists in good deeds. Now in order to do good deeds, it matters not only what a man does, but also how he does it; to wit, that he do it from right choice [*electionem rectam*] and not merely from impulse or passion. And, since choice is about things in reference to the end, rectitude of choice requires two things: namely, the due end, and something suitably ordained to that due end. Now man is suitably directed to his due end by a virtue which perfects the soul in the appetitive part, the object of which is the good and the end. And to that which is suitably ordained to the due end man needs to be rightly disposed by a habit in his reason, because counsel and choice, which are about things ordained to the end, are acts of the reason.[7]

Simply put, a good deed is always the result of a right choice. In order that a person does a good deed out of right choice, there must be an act of the reason (through use of intellectual virtue) as well as an act of the appetite (through the use of moral virtue).

[5] S.T. I.II.55.2.ad3.
[6] S.T. I.II.58.2c.
[7] S.T. I.II.57.5c.

1.1 Prudence

First, I turn my attention to the role of the reason in choosing to do a good deed. According to Aquinas, for a person to make a choice, there must be something for that person to choose. "In choice [*electione*] there are two things, namely, the intention of the end, and this belongs to the moral virtue; and the preferential choice [*praeacceptio*] of that which is unto the end, and this belongs to prudence."[8] Simply put, prudence dictates the goal of our choices by providing the end; prudence determines what is to be done. As such, Aquinas relies on Aristotle to define prudence as "right reason applied to action."[9] As a virtue of the practical reason, then, prudence is necessary for choosing to do a good deed because it provides knowledge of the goal.[10] Knowing what one is doing is a prerequisite for choosing that action. For example, planting a tree is a good deed only if I *knowingly* intend to plant a seed in the ground. If I simply throw my apple out the window of my moving car as a means of getting rid of the core, and the discarded core happens to grow into a tree, I did not choose to plant a tree. Prudence is the virtue whereby our practical reason is inclined to discern those actions that ought to be done. As such, Aquinas says that prudence is the first principle of movement insofar as it provides the end to which the appetite is meant to conform.[11]

If the appetite is going to intend the end provided by reason, then it needs a virtue to incline it to that end. These virtues that move the appetite to conform to reason (i.e., obey reason by seeking the goal it provides) are called moral virtues. Aquinas quotes Aristotle in order to define moral virtue: "Hence the definition of moral virtue (Ethic. ii, 6) states that it is 'a habit of choosing the mean appointed by reason as a prudent man would appoint it.' "[12] Therefore, before treating these moral virtues individually, it is necessary to briefly examine what it means to say that prudence appoints a mean (*medium*). If moral virtue chooses the mean, then this mean is the end provided by prudence.

[8] S.T. I.II.56.4.ad4.
[9] S.T. II.II.47.2.sc.
[10] S.T. II.II.47.2c.
[11] S.T. I.II.58.2c.
[12] S.T. I.II.59.1c.

When Aquinas says that prudence provides the mean as the object to be intended by moral virtue, he is appealing to the contextualized nature of that end.

> In actions and passions the mean and the extremes depend on various circumstances [*diversas circumstantias*]: hence nothing hinders something from being extreme in a particular virtue as to one circumstance, while the same thing is a mean in respect of other circumstances, through being in conformity with reason. This is the case with magnanimity and magnificence. For if we look at the absolute quantity of the respective objects of these virtues, we shall call it an extreme and a maximum: but if we consider the quantity in relation to other circumstances, then it has the character of a mean: since these virtues tend to this maximum in accordance with the rule of reason, i.e. "where" it is right, "when" it is right, and for an "end" that is right. There will be excess, if one tends to this maximum "when" it is not right, or "where" it is not right, or for an undue "end"; and there will be deficiency if one fails to tend thereto "where" one ought, and "when" one ought.[13]

In determining what ought to be done, prudence moves the practical reason to scrutinize the particular context (i.e., the "various circumstances") of an action. For example, at times, prudence will determine that an act of fortitude is necessary. Imagine being mugged in a dark alley. In order to combat the fear that arises, prudence must determine what degree of fortitude is required. Not all muggings are the same. Prudence must attend to the particular circumstances of the moment. Am I being mugged by a four-year-old child wielding a plastic spoon? Or am I being mugged by four men who just exited a bar after celebrating their rugby team's victory? These various circumstances of the situation are the possibility of prudently discerning a virtuous response. A refusal to acquiesce to the toddler's demands may be courageous, while that same resolve misses the mean when surrounded by the inebriated rugby players. Depending on the circumstance, fortitude quickly degenerates into brashness, leading the person to miss the goal of surviving.

[13] S.T. I.II.64.1.ad2.

Through prudence, the practical reason attends to a particular context without which a mean could not be determined. Therefore, as we will see, one cannot properly describe the exercise of moral virtue without reference to context. If fortitude is to avoid being cowardly and avoid being brash, prudence needs to provide the mean as a goal. Moral virtue needs an end to seek, and, as a mean, that end must be determined by prudence through careful consideration of particular context. Hence, prudence is the practical reason's ability to relate to a particular context (i.e., the "various circumstances" in which virtuous action takes place). Insofar as prudence accurately determines the mean to be sought, the resultant act is called a right action. Making the right choice requires that one pay attention to the context of a decision.

1.2 Justice

Once prudence has determined the mean, it is up to moral virtue to move the appetite to choose that mean. "Moral virtue is properly a perfection of the appetitive part of the soul in regard to some determinate matter: and the measure or rule of the appetitive movement in respect of appetible objects is the reason. But the good of that which is measured or ruled consists in its conformity with its rule."[14] Having established that prudence determines the mean to be sought by the moral virtues, we can see that moral virtue is said to participate in reason insofar as it conforms to the command of prudence. Put differently, when the appetite actually chooses the mean provided by prudential reason, the resultant choice is said to be virtuous.

In order to make such virtuous choices, a person requires moral virtues that move the appetite to choose the mean provided by prudence. Now, the appetite is composed of three parts: the concupiscible appetite, the irascible appetite, and the rational appetite. Together, the concupiscible and the irascible appetites constitute what Aquinas calls the sensitive appetite, and the rational appetite is called the will. I will begin with a consideration of the will's relationship to the prac-

[14] S.T. I.II.64.1c.

tical reason. Here, I am concerned with how justice responds to the command of prudence. According to Aquinas:

> It belongs to human virtue to make man good, to make his work accord with reason. This happens in three ways: first, by rectifying reason itself, and this is done by the intellectual virtues [e.g., prudence]; secondly, by establishing the rectitude of reason in human affairs, and this belongs to justice; thirdly, by removing the obstacles to the establishment of this rectitude in human affairs.[15]

When Aquinas speaks of "establishing the rectitude of reason in human affairs," he is describing the action of justice. As the "perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right," justice intends the external operations whereby a person relates to others equitably.[16] Hence, "it is proper to justice . . . to direct man in his relations with others." Through prudential reason and a just will, the human person is oriented toward that which is external to itself. Hence, in order that a good operation be done, prudence moves the reason to attend to a particular context, discerning what operation ought to be done. Then, justice moves the will to obey the command of prudence, actually carrying out the operation prescribed by reason. Prudential reason commands and a just will obeys. Hence, justice "establishes the rectitude of reason in human affairs" by willing the vision of prudence into reality. A prudent person may know that the hungry should be fed, but it takes a just person to feed the hungry.

1.3 Temperance and Fortitude

Through justice, then, the rational appetite (i.e., the will) intends the end provided by prudent reasoning. The role of the sensitive appetite, however, remains to be described. For our purposes here, I will offer a brief description of how the movements of the sensitive appetite (i.e., the passions) affect the will's ability to act justly. As Aquinas points out, some moral virtues help a person do good deeds

[15] S.T. II.II.123.1c.
[16] S.T. II.II.58.1.arg1.

"by removing the obstacles to the establishment of this rectitude in human affairs." He continues:

> Now the human will is hindered in two ways from following the rectitude of reason. First, through being drawn [*attrahitur*] by some object of pleasure to something other than what the rectitude of reason requires; and this obstacle [*impedimentum*] is removed by the virtue of temperance. Secondly, through the will being disinclined [*repellit*] to follow that which is in accordance with reason, on account of some difficulty that presents itself. In order to remove this obstacle fortitude of the mind is requisite, whereby to resist the aforesaid difficulty even as a man, by fortitude of body, overcomes and removes bodily obstacles.[17]

Aquinas frames these hindrances to the will's rectitude in terms of disordered passions. The concupiscible appetite "pursues sensible and bodily goods," while the irascible appetite "flies from sensible and bodily evils."[18] The obstacle (*impedimentur*) that temperance removes is an attraction (*attractus*) to an end that contradicts the end provided by prudence. Prudence may dictate that one should get out of bed at six o'clock in the morning and begin working on his manuscript, while the concupiscible appetite would rather stay in bed until ten thirty watching television. The concupiscible appetite may on occasion be moved toward the imprudent end through attraction. In these circumstances, the concupiscible appetite is said to be disordered due to a lack of conformity to reason. Hence, Aquinas says that temperance is charged with "removing the obstacle" so that the will might more readily choose to conform to the command of prudence.

It must be emphasized, however, that the passions of the sensitive appetites are not necessarily obstacles that hinder the movement of the will. Aquinas is clear that passions are not in and of themselves bad.[19] On the contrary, passions can aid the will in its ability to move toward the reasonable good. Hence, when Aquinas says that temperance removes obstacles, this removal is not adequately understood in a purely negative fashion (i.e., as solely mitigating the adversarial

[17] S.T. II.II.123.1c.
[18] S.T. II.II.141.3c.
[19] S.T. I.II.24.2c.

role of disordered passions). Rather, temperance removes obstacles by ordering the passions. More specifically, by inclining the concupiscible appetite to be drawn toward the good determined by reason, temperance inclines the concupiscible appetite to support the will. Put differently, a temperate person takes pleasure in what is reasonable. Hence, Aquinas says that "the passions of the soul, in so far as they are contrary to the order of reason, incline us to sin: but in so far as they are controlled by reason, they pertain to virtue."[20]

Insofar as it is charged with ordering passions that can either hinder or support the will, fortitude is similar to temperance. Rather than being charged with ordering desires and sorrows of the concupiscible appetite, however, fortitude is charged with ordering the hopes and fears that occur when the irascible appetite encounters the difficulties that arise when a person seeks to obey prudence. For example, the irascible appetite may become fearful of an end that is perceived as concomitant with the end commanded by reason. A young child may know he needs to begin a load of laundry; however, his fear of the basement is enough to repel him from following through on this duty. When disordered, this fear of difficulty causes the will to reject the judgment of prudence. But it is the task of fortitude to incline the irascible appetite to quell fear, for "it behooves one not only firmly to bear the assault of these difficulties by restraining fear, but also moderately to withstand them, when, to wit, it is necessary to dispel them altogether in order to free oneself therefrom for the future."[21] Hence, the fortitudinous person is able to bear the unavoidable difficulties that accompany reasonable operations.

In the end, the sensitive appetites are naturally concerned with the well-being of one's self. When they fail to conform to the rule of reason, the sensitive appetites have the ability to hinder the will's desire to carry out the external operations commanded by prudence. Put differently, seeking pleasure and avoiding fear can stop us from doing what is just. They also have the ability, however, to support the will's ability to obey reason. Together, then, temperance and fortitude ensure that our concern for ourselves does not inordinately affect our ability to will the common good. Rather, temperance and fortitude work together to order the mind's inclinations so that

[20] S.T. I.II.24.2.ad3.
[21] S.T. II.II.123.3c.

prudence can accurately determine the goal to be sought and the will can readily obey. In fact, as I will point out now, it is not possible to obey reason and operate justly without the assistance of temperance and fortitude.

In order to carry out a good operation, we need all four of these virtues. They all depend on one another. Without prudence engaging the world around us, we have no particular goal to seek. Without justice, the goal will remain an intellectual exercise. Without temperance and fortitude, the will quickly loses its resolve. In short, there is no such thing as a human operation that lacks the influence of any one of these cardinal virtues.

1.4 Maintaining the Tension of Codependence

Thus far I have described the relationship between these moral virtues in terms of their ability to conform to reason. Put differently, reason moves the appetites.[22] As we saw in the previous chapter, however, the relationship between the will and the intellect is not so easily described.[23] While Aquinas clearly champions the primacy of reason when it comes to describing virtuous operation, he also clearly champions the primacy of the appetite. For instance, in an article where he is discussing the subjects of virtue, he says the following:

> But the subject of a habit which is called a virtue simply, can only be the will, or some power in so far as it is moved by the will. And the reason of this is, that the will moves to their acts all those other powers that are in some way rational, as we have said above: and therefore if man do well actually, this is because he has a good will. Therefore the virtue which makes a man to do well actually, and not merely to have the aptness to do well, must be either in the will itself; or in some power as moved by the will. Now it happens that the intellect is moved by the will, just as are the other powers: for a man considers something actually, because he wills to do so. And therefore the intellect, in so far as it is subordinate to the will, can be the subject of virtue absolutely so called.[24]

[22] Cf. S.T. I.II.56.4c.
[23] Cf. chap. 3.I.2.
[24] S.T. I.II.56.3c.

In the end, then, Aquinas holds that it is by an act of moral virtue (i.e., an operation of the appetitive power) that we choose rightly.[25] It is simultaneously true, however, that no choice can be made without an end that is provided by reason.

Here, we need to address a tension in Aquinas's description of the relationship between the intellect and the will. As we saw in our previous chapter's treatment of the theological virtues, Aquinas has different ways of speaking about the relationship between virtues that allows him to maintain the tension of codependency that exists between the intellect and the will. Aquinas says that, by providing the end, "reason is the first principle of human action."[26] On the other hand, in the above block quote, Aquinas also says that "the will moves to their acts all those powers that are in some way rational." Hence, the will is the mover, but it is only virtuous insofar as it is in conformity to reason.

I highlight this tension as a reminder that, as with the theological virtues, we must avoid reifying these virtues. As we have seen, when Aquinas speaks about virtuous operation, he is able to speak in various ways that emphasize the role of a particular aspect of human nature and its relationship to the world in which it acts. In fact, this tension is so fundamental to Aquinas's understanding of the human mind that it allows him to blur the distinction between intellectual virtues and moral virtues. When discussing the intellectual virtue of prudence, Aquinas says that it is rightly called a moral virtue. "Now it belongs to prudence, as stated above, to apply right reason to action, and this is not done without a right appetite. Hence prudence has the nature of virtue not only as the other intellectual virtues have it, but also as the moral virtues have it, among which virtues it is enumerated."[27] The virtues and the powers they move are not entities that work together to render a human act. Unlike internal organs that can be neatly distinguished and assigned their individual tasks, the moral virtues provide us with various ways of describing the complexity of a single human action.

This grammar of moral virtue, then, provides a way to speak of the spiritual life with a degree of specificity that does not concomitantly dissect and compartmentalize morality. According to James Keenan,

[25] S.T. I.II.58.1.ad2.
[26] S.T. I.II.58.2c.
[27] S.T. II.II.47.4c.

"The mutual dependency of prudence and the moral virtues (this is an evolving spiral, not a vicious cycle) incorporates and integrates moral reasoning into an evolving vision of the human person."[28] Through these moral virtues (and all the virtues contained within these cardinal four[29]), the human person accomplishes the operations that constitute the good life. The question remains, what role do these moral virtues play in striving to increase in charity? Before answering this question, I wish to take a moment to describe how the human person acquires and increases in moral virtue.

2. Acquiring and Increasing Moral Virtue

Simply put, virtues that can be acquired are caused by acts.[30] According to Aquinas,

> Everything that is passive and moved by another is disposed by the action of the agent; wherefore if the acts be multiplied a certain quality is formed in the power which is passive and moved, which quality is called a habit: just as the habits of moral virtue are caused in the appetitive powers, according as they are moved by the reason.[31]

For example, when we obey the command of reason, that action influences our appetite, disposing the will to more readily obey reason in the future.

These virtue-causing actions are not innately known. Rather, in order to perform the acts that cause virtue, we need friends to imitate and learn from. According to Aquinas, friendship is required for happiness. We need friends so that we have people to love but also so that we might be helped toward good operation.[32] As we will see in the following section, it is difficult to overstate the importance of relationships with others when it comes to developing one's virtues. In an article that treats the need for prudence, Aquinas takes up the

[28] James F. Keenan, "The Virtue of Prudence," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 259.

[29] Cf. S.T. I.II.61.2.ad3.

[30] Cf. S.T. I.II.51.2 and S.T. I.II.65.2.ad3.

[31] S.T. I.II.51.2c.

[32] S.T. I.II.4.8c.

objection that prudence is not necessary because we can lead a good life by following the good counsel of others. When we act according to the good counsel of others (i.e., when we take advice from friends or mentors), that particular act is "not yet quite perfect."[33] To illustrate the point: Because I trust my mother's wisdom, I will visit the sick if she tells me it is the right thing to do. When I act solely out of my trust in her counsel, however, I have failed to operate out of my own prudential reasoning. Hence, my act is imperfect. But when the counsel of others becomes the counsel of our own intellect, we have increased in prudence. Once my intellect gains the experience necessary to independently see visiting the sick as a good to be done regardless of my mother's endorsement, my action will rightly be called an act of virtue simply.

As Aquinas points out, though, a single act is not sufficient to cause a virtue.[34] To say that we need experience in order to follow our own counsel is to say that developing a pattern of virtuous action is crucial to growing in virtue. These ongoing patterns of action are called *exercitia*, a term that "refers . . . to the regular performance or execution of particular acts."[35] James Keenan points out that Aquinas's affinity for this term seems to come from St. Paul's use of this metaphor in describing the Christian life.[36] To exercise moral virtue one must repeatedly choose to do good deeds. For example, Aquinas points out that in order to have prudence, one must have the experience of using one's reason to command the appetite.[37] So it is with the other virtues; if one wants to become more temperate, one must act temperately. Therefore, when these "acts be multiplied, a certain quality is formed in the power which is passive and moved."[38] An

[33] S.T. I.II.57.5.ad2.

[34] Cf. S.T. I.II.51.3 and S.T. II.II.24.6.ad2: "Even when an acquired virtue is being engendered, each act does not complete the formation of the virtue, but conduces towards that effect by disposing to it, while the last act, which is the most perfect, and acts in virtue of all those that preceded it, reduces the virtue into act, just as when many drops hollow out a stone."

[35] James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's* Summa Theologiae (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 51. For a thorough discussion of how Thomas uses the term *exercitium* throughout the *Summa*, see also pp. 50–52 and 105–8.

[36] Ibid.

[37] S.T. II.II.47.16.ad2.

[38] S.T. I.II.51.2c.

appetite that has learned to desire what is reasonable is all the more ready to choose the reasonable end. In other words, by developing patterns of good deeds, we continually deepen our disposition toward further virtuous operation.

These *exercitia* constitute the virtuous acts that allow us to acquire and increase in virtue. Increasing in moral virtue is not, however, as simple as isolating a single virtue (i.e., fortitude) and solely focusing on the matter of that virtue. This approach misunderstands the co-dependence of the virtues. Rather, to increase in moral virtue, it is necessary that all the virtues be exercised. As I said above, a good deed can be accomplished only by the simultaneous use of all four cardinal virtues. Due to this fact, a deficiency in any one of the virtues hinders the growth of the others. Hence, Aquinas says:

> If [a person] exercise himself, by good deeds, in all such matters, he will acquire the habits of all the moral virtues. But if he exercise himself by good deeds in regard to one matter, but not in regard to another, for instance, by behaving well in matters of anger, but not in matters of concupiscence; he will indeed acquire a certain habit of restraining his anger; but this habit will lack the nature of virtue, through the absence of prudence, which is wanting in matters of concupiscence.[39]

Again, in Aquinas's discussion of increasing in moral virtue, we see his desire to maintain the tension between them by emphatically asserting their codependence. If we try to separate them, we cease to discuss moral virtue. We cannot rightly speak of a person who is incredibly temperate but lacks all fortitude. To be a triathlete one must be good at swimming, cycling, and running. It does not matter how good at cycling and running a competitor is. If she cannot swim, her cycling performance will suffer due to the fact that she drowned in the first leg of the race. In short, it takes an integrated understanding of the human person to rightly exercise the moral virtues. To increase in virtue, one must attend to all matters of virtue, without giving undue preference to the matter of a favorite virtue. Obsessing over social justice might easily lead to an intemperate mind that, consequently, is incapable of accurately determining what injustices need attention.

[39] S.T. I.II.65.1.ad1.

Moral living is relying on the help of friends to develop a pattern of good operations that will, in turn, help others develop their own patterns. This process requires embracing membership in a community as well as cultivating a willingness to engage one's particular context. With this description of moral virtue in mind, I turn to see how these patterns relate to the theological virtues. In essence, I am trying to articulate how one might rightly call these operations a participation in the Divine Nature. Put differently, how do the moral virtues help us strive to increase in charity?

II. Embodying Friendship with God

As I stated above, the purpose of this chapter is to emphasize the fact that the operations carried out through the moral virtues constitute the particular shape of our friendship with God. Having shown that every human operation requires the use of all the cardinal virtues, I turn now to a description of how Aquinas envisions the role of these virtues in a life lived striving to increase in charity. I will begin by first determining what it might mean to say that one operates out of charity (*ex caritate*). Then, I will turn my attention to what it means to say that the moral virtues are a necessary part of growing in charity.

1. Operating Ex Caritate

Operations that constitute the spiritual life are gifts from God insofar as the moral virtues required for such operations are motivated by and in service of God's friendship. When speaking about acts of charity, we can distinguish between charity's *terminus a quo* (the end out of which) and charity's *terminus ad quem* (the end toward which). The difference between these two is the difference between charity's current union being the source of action (i.e., the mode of operation) and charity's everlasting union being the goal of action (i.e., the term of operation). To speak of an operation being done *ex caritate* implies both a particular movement and a particular end. Specifically, it implies that an operation is done out of existing union with God for the sake of everlasting union with God.[40]

[40] Cf. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 126.

Turning first to the *terminus ad quem* of charity, it must be emphasized that charity (in conjunction with the other theological virtues) provides the Final End.[41] Having spent some time discussing this role of charity in the previous chapter, I will not spend much time replicating that discussion. Here, it will suffice to repeat that charity forms the moral virtues by putting all other ends in service of the Final End. All operations done *ex caritate* have proximate ends that help persons move toward their Final End. For example, if done *ex caritate*, almsgiving is an operation that serves movement toward the Final End (i.e., friendship with God). Hence, when formed by charity, prudence is right reason about things to be done for the sake of everlasting union with God.

When we speak about charity's formal role in terms of commanding, we see the emergence of how we might speak of charity as the *terminus a quo* of an operation. By putting all other ends at the service of the Final End, charity is said to command all the other virtues. Prudence is still charged with specifying and commanding the deeds to be done, but charity's antecedent command implies that the object of prudence is always a proximate end. By providing the remote Final End to which all other virtues unite their proximate ends, charity is called the *efficient* form of the virtues.[42] In other words, the efficient form of any operation done *ex caritate* is friendship with God. The essential form of the operation, however, is the moral virtue that specifies the operation. Friendship with God motivates us into specific operations that have the moral virtues as their essential forms. Simply put, when done *ex caritate*, an act of moral virtue has friendship with God as its mode of operation and its term of operation. Hence, to say that an operation is done *ex caritate* is to say that it begins and ends in charity (i.e., union with the Final End). As such, the operation is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's life within the person.

By speaking of charity as an efficient form that commands, Aquinas makes it clear that charity needs the moral virtues. Just as there are no acts done by a single cardinal virtue, there are no acts done solely by charity. Acts of charity are operations done *ex caritate*. The first part of this chapter emphasized the fact that all four cardinal virtues

[41] S.T. II.II.23.6c.

[42] S.T. II.II.23.8.ad1.

are necessary for carrying out the operations whereby we most fully resemble God.[43] When done *ex caritate*, operations of moral virtue embody friendship with God, giving that friendship a particular shape.

When treating the cardinal virtues in question 61 of the *Prima Secundae*, Aquinas offers a typology that clearly articulates the radical influence that charity has on the moral life while simultaneously emphasizing the necessary role of the moral virtues. Here, it will be beneficial to quote Aquinas at length:

> Since man by his nature is a social animal, these [cardinal] virtues, in so far as they are in him according to the condition of his nature, are called "social" virtues; since it is by reason of them that man behaves himself well in the conduct of human affairs. It is in this sense that we have been speaking of these virtues until now. But since it behooves a man to do his utmost to strive [*trahat*] onward even to Divine things, as even the Philosopher declares in Ethic. x, 7, and as Scripture often admonishes us—for instance: "Be ye . . . perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), we must needs place some virtues between the social or human virtues, and the exemplar virtues which are Divine. Now these virtues differ by reason of a difference of movement and term: so that some are virtues of men who are on their way and tending towards the Divine similitude; and these are called "perfecting" virtues [*virtutes purgatoriae*]. Thus prudence, by contemplating the things of God, counts as nothing all things of the world, and directs all the thoughts of the soul to God alone: temperance, so far as nature allows, neglects the needs of the body; fortitude prevents the soul from being afraid of neglecting the body and rising to heavenly things; and justice consists in the soul giving a whole-hearted consent to follow the way thus proposed.[44]

Here, Aquinas tells us that some cardinal virtues are called "perfecting" due to the fact that they "differ by reason of a difference of movement and term" from those cardinal virtues that are called "social." As we have seen, charity is charged with forming cardinal

[43] S.T. I.II.55.2.ad3.
[44] S.T. I.II.61.5c.

virtues so as to direct the person to friendship with God (i.e., the "divine similitude" Aquinas calls the image of re-creation). Put differently, because they operate *ex caritate*, the perfecting virtues have a different mode of operation and a different term of operation than the social virtues. It is by virtue of this relationship to charity (i.e., being elevated toward God) that the moral virtues are called "perfecting."

For Aquinas, when charity forms a virtue's mode and term of operation, that virtue is rightly called a gift. Hence, he expounds upon the difference between social and perfecting virtues by appealing to the familiar language of "infusion."[45] As infused, the perfecting virtues seek a proximate end that surpasses human reason. In distinguishing infused moral virtue from acquired moral virtue, he says:

> Human virtue directed to the good which is defined according to the rule of human reason [i.e., the social type of cardinal virtue] can be caused by human acts: inasmuch as such acts proceed from reason, by whose power and rule the aforesaid good is established. On the other hand, virtue which directs man to the good as defined by the Divine Law, and not by human reason [i.e., the perfecting type of cardinal virtue], cannot be caused by human acts, the principle of which is reason, but is produced in us by the Divine operation alone.[46]

When Aquinas says that infused moral virtue is "produced in us by the Divine operation alone" (*causatur solum in nobis per operationem divinam*), he is not implying that human cooperation plays no role in the generation of infused moral virtue. Recalling the final part of Aquinas's definition of virtue (i.e., "which God works in us, without us"), we can see that, rather than excluding human cooperation from the definition, Aquinas is including charity as a necessary part of the definition. Hence, when discussing the gifts of the Holy Spirit Aquinas says that "wisdom and understanding and the like are gifts of the Holy Ghost, according as they are quickened [*informantur*] by charity."[47] Just as human cooperation is an integral part of the generation of infused theological virtues, human cooperation is necessary for

[45] Cf. S.T. I.II.63.3c.
[46] S.T. I.II.63.2c.
[47] S.T. I.II.68.8.ad3.

the generation and increase of infused moral virtues. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, "infusion" does not so much denote the mechanism of generation as it denotes the divine source of a virtue.[48] As formed by charity, the perfecting virtues are infused. As infused, the perfecting virtues are gifts from God.

Operating *ex caritate* is acting out of the perfecting virtues that are, with the theological virtues, a single gift from/of God. The perfecting virtues are the result of God's friendship radically transforming our entire moral lives to the extent that we can speak of moral virtues that are capable of transcending human nature. The infused moral virtues do not receive their object from reason alone but from faith's reasonable assent to God's revelation as communicated through the person of Christ and the life of his Church. Nevertheless, lest we use the language of "infusion" and "gift" to negate the role of human action, it is crucial to emphasize that, just as charity needs the symbolic objects of faith to be in love with God, the gifts of infused moral virtue need the historically mediated content of divine law. As with acquired moral virtue, infused moral virtue needs the life of a community (i.e., divine instruments) through which we are given the "divine things" toward which we strive.[49]

When we operate *ex caritate*, we are "tending toward the divine similitude."[50] As such, the life lived through these perfecting virtues is the action that manifests divine action in our lives. When discussing whether or not the gifts of the Holy Spirit are necessary for salvation, Aquinas invokes a telling metaphor: "That which has a nature, or form, or virtue imperfectly, cannot of itself work, unless it be moved by another. Thus the sun which possesses light perfectly, can shine by itself; whereas the moon which has the nature of light imperfectly, sheds only a borrowed light."[51] Living *ex caritate* is like shining borrowed light. By the Holy Spirit's participation in us, we reflect divinity onto the world. By reflecting divinity, the perfecting virtues also perfect the communities they engage. As I emphasized in the first section of this chapter, all moral virtue, whether acquired or infused, must attend to the particularity of its context. Hence, to

[48] Cf. chap. 3.II.2.
[49] S.T. I.II.61.5c.
[50] Ibid.
[51] S.T. I.II.68.2c.

most fully reflect divinity, perfecting virtue must engage the particularity of its community. Put differently, the task of reflecting divinity demands that we take into consideration those who need the light. Hence, in Aquinas's treatment of the perfecting virtues, we have the foundations of a sacramental theology constructed in terms of grace and virtue. Simply put, to operate *ex caritate* is to be a sacrament.

2. Dispositive Acts of Charity

Having established what it means to operate *ex caritate*, I now move to a consideration of how this operation is tantamount to striving toward an increase in charity. I will argue that rather than narrowly defining the spiritual life in terms of charity alone (i.e., "striving to increase in charity"), it is more beneficial to speak of "striving to reflect divinity." I prefer this metaphor because, as I pointed out above, reflecting divinity necessarily implies the operations born of the perfecting virtues. So, to more fully describe what it means to strive to reflect divinity, I would like to spend time examining how the perfecting virtues relate to an increase in charity.

From the first, it is important to reiterate what was said in the previous chapter: charity does not increase by amount but by radication.[52] "This is what God does when He increases charity, that is He makes it to have a greater hold on the soul, and the likeness of the Holy Ghost to be more perfectly participated by the soul."[53] Because charity is the participation of the Holy Spirit in us, to increase in charity is always a gratuitous gift from God. What, then, does it mean to say that the spiritual life is striving to increase in charity?

According to Aquinas,

> Each act of charity disposes to an increase of charity, insofar as one act of charity makes man more ready to act again according to charity, and this readiness increasing, man breaks out into an act of more fervent love and strives to advance in charity, and then his charity increases actually.[54]

[52] Cf. chap. 3.III.2.
[53] S.T. II.II.24.5.ad3.
[54] S.T. II.II.24.6c.

Why is it that each act of charity "makes man more ready to act again according to charity"? Short answer: every form requires a disposition. To deepen our conformity to charity (i.e., to more readily be formed by charity), we must have a disposition conducive to receive charity. By developing the essential forms of charity's acts (i.e., the "perfecting" virtues), we ready ourselves to conform to the Spirit's participation. Since, as we've seen, acts of charity are acts of the perfecting virtues, in those actions we increase in the perfecting virtues. Acts of charity, then, dispose us to increase in charity, because they simultaneously make us more virtuous. The more morally virtuous a person the more disposed that person is to act according to charity. When we, out of charity, exercise our moral virtues, we cooperate with God's gift in a way that makes us more ready to receive God. While our virtuous predisposition does not necessitate our righteousness, it opens us up to the One whose participation in us is righteousness.

To offer a thicker description of this dispositive process, it will be beneficial to return to Aquinas's description of the perfecting virtues in question 61 of the *Prima Secundae*. In the reply to the second objection, Aquinas cites Plotinus's description of the perfecting virtues as "uprooting" (*auferunt*) the passions.[55] But he ends the reply by adding a caveat: "It may also be said that here [Plotinus] is speaking of passions as denoting inordinate emotions [*motus*]."[56] Hence, Aquinas frames his discussion of the perfecting virtues largely in terms of their role in reordering disordered passions. The perfecting virtues of infused temperance and fortitude stop the will from being hindered in its inclination to follow the command of infused prudence. A more literal translation of *virtutes purgatoriae* ("perfecting virtues") would be "purgative virtues." These virtues purge us of disordered passions. The more the sensitive appetite is perfected by purgative virtues, the more the will is ready to actually operate out of charity. The more we order our passions, the more we accept the movement of the Holy Spirit within ourselves. Hence, through the perfecting virtues, we are said to receive the gift of cooperating in our salvation.

Put differently, the order of our passions is the disposition needed by charity. Therefore, our movement toward God is reliant on the

[55] S.T. I.II.65.1.ad2.

[56] Ibid.

order of our passions. This allows Aquinas to claim that, even though acts of charity do not necessitate an actual increase in charity, dispositive acts of charity are rightly called an "advance on the way to God."[57] Through these dispositive operations done *ex caritate*, we strive to increase in charity so that we might more fully reflect the divinity that moves us. Put differently, our nature becomes more divine and we are thereby more ready to act as such.

This way of speaking about increase in charity allows us to see that the entirety of our moral lives is a gratuitous gift from God. As operations done *ex caritate*, the acts of perfecting virtues by which we seek to dispose ourselves for increase in charity come from an existent friendship with God. Put simply, it is God who moves us to seek God. Hence, when we speak about the perfecting virtues purging us of the disordered passions that inhibit charity's radication, we are utilizing a grammar of justification that allows us to emphasize God's operation in our lives. It is God who calls us into being as pilgrims on The Way. On the other hand, if we speak of the perfecting virtues as striving toward deeper union with God, we are utilizing a grammar of sanctification that allows us to emphasize our cooperative role in the sanctification of ourselves and others. Together, these ways of speaking about the moral virtues allow for a description of *theosis* that refuses to neglect the dynamic and embodied nature of that process.

Having laid out how acts of charity dispose us for an increase in charity, I would like to return briefly to our previous discussion of the degrees of charity.[58] I highlighted Aquinas's treatment of these degrees as a way of showing that the spiritual life is a dynamic process. We recall the following passage:

> In like manner the diverse degrees of charity are distinguished according to the different pursuits to which man is brought by the increase of charity. For at first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity: this concerns beginners, in whom charity has to be fed or fostered lest it be destroyed: in the second place man's chief pursuit is to aim at

[57] S.T. II.II.24.6.ad3.

[58] Cf. chap. 3.I.3.

> progress in good, and this is the pursuit of the proficient, whose chief aim is to strengthen their charity by adding to it: while man's third pursuit is to aim chiefly at union with and enjoyment of God: this belongs to the perfect who "desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ."[59]

It seems to me that we can thicken this description of the degrees of charity by utilizing Aquinas's description of the perfecting virtues, namely, each degree emphasizes the role of a particular virtue. Since "resisting his concupiscences" is the pursuit of a beginner, charity's command of temperance is particularly important. Put differently, beginners need to give special attention to matters of temperance, striving to order their desires. Similarly, in those who are proficient in charity, charity's command of fortitude comes to the fore. The proficient give special attention to matters of fortitude, striving to order their fears so that they might have the strength to persevere. Taking up one's cross and following Jesus is an experience that demands fortitude. Hence, Aquinas describes those proficient in charity as acting "with one hand doing work and with the other holding a sword."[60] Finally, in those who are perfect in charity, charity's command of justice takes a place of primacy. Because their passions have been rightly ordered (i.e., disordered passions have been uprooted), the perfect give special attention to willing the good presented by infused prudence. The more readily they are able to will this good, the more they are said to be perfect in charity.

To be clear, charity always commands all of these virtues at every degree of charity. I reiterate: the moral virtues cannot be isolated. The emphasis on a particular moral virtue, however, is what manifests the wayfarer's current level of charity. This emphasis is the consequence of the particular matter at hand. The "various circumstances" of our lives may render us beginners in desperate need of temperance. For example, there are few parents who remain perfect in charity

[59] S.T. II.II.24.9.c.

[60] S.T. II.II.24.9.ad2. This use of Scripture (Neh 4:17) is telling. "One hand doing the work" implies that temperance has stopped disordered concupiscence from desiring unreasonable ends. Hence, the prudent end is being willed (i.e., "work" is being done). Nevertheless, the other hand needs the sword to defend against those dangers that are concomitant with the work being done. Hence, fortitude is needed to mitigate the fears that would hinder the will from working toward the prudent end.

when confronted with the death of their child. Likewise, few would argue that St. Peter was perfect in charity when fear of harm caused him to deny Christ three times. Hence, the "various circumstances" in which we live must dictate what type of friend we will be to God. At times, we will inevitably be the type of person who struggles in our friendship with God. A cursory glimpse at the lives of the saints will confirm this dynamic character of the spiritual life. Most saints have their "dark nights." Similarly, most sinners have their moments of perfection wherein they are ready to act spontaneously and passionately out of love for God. In short, the degrees of charity are not meant to describe a monolithic trajectory of charity's increase. Rather, appealing to the degrees of charity is a way of describing our dispositive struggle. In the life of a wayfarer, striving to reflect divinity is always a dynamic struggle that requires our willingness to engage our particular contexts. Increasing in charity, then, demands that we utilize the moral virtues to engage various circumstances of our lives.

I argue, then, that the degrees of charity are about how *disordered* passions, when left unchecked, will gradually eradicate the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The more ordered our passions, the more capable we are of receiving and embodying the movement of the Holy Spirit. I say "capable" because ordered passions do not necessitate an increase in charity. There is a long history of saints who, despite their ordered passions, regularly experienced a lack of union with God. The degrees of charity, then, are also about how *ordered* passions gradually accept the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, allowing our lives to more fully reflect divinity.

To conclude this subsection, I offer a brief clarification regarding the way I am using the term "striving." According to James Keenan, the "strivings, or formal interior acts [of charity], are antecedent to questions concerning specification, that is, they are antecedent to questions of intention and choice, or to questions pertaining to the proximate ends intended and the actual objects realized."[61] Put differently, when trying to describe the goodness of the person, whether or not they are operating *ex caritate* is the criterion by which we judge a person as good. While Keenan uses the word "striving" to denote this antecedent "moral motivation," my use of "striving" is intended

[61] Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 142.

to include the role of the "perfecting" virtues. This difference in use of the term "striving" comes from the difference in our projects. Keenan establishes rules for the use of "good" and "right" in describing the moral quality of an individual. On the other hand, I describe the embodied spiritual life in terms of the codependence of the theological virtues and the moral virtues. As such, when I use the term "strive," I denote operations carried out *ex caritate*. Insofar as these operations come from a community and serve a community, striving to increase in charity needs the specification that occurs through the exercise of moral virtue done *ex caritate*. Striving to reflect divinity is an operation born of an embodied struggle. We must wrestle with the passions that are the result of our embodied nature. Further, because this striving is accomplished through the exercise of the perfecting virtues, there is no step we take on the path to God that is not intimately related to the community in which we live. As a community, we strive together. To conclude this section on embodying charity, I turn now to the crucial role of community in the spiritual life.

3. Communal Embodiment of Friendship with God

At the beginning of this chapter, I noted that, due to the ensuing turn to Aquinas's eucharistic theology, I am primarily interested in the role of the moral virtues in the unity of the mystical body of Christ. With that in mind, I return to a consideration of (1) the necessary role of historical mediation in the generation of the theological virtues and (2) the role of human action in the sanctification of others.

In chapter 2, I emphasized the fact that faith works in a human mode.[62] That is to say, the symbols through which God's revelation is presented to the human intellect are always objects proportionate to human reason. Aquinas emphasizes that faith's unseen object (God) is known through complex propositions. In turn, this leads him to place an emphasis on the role of words in sacramental signification.[63] It seems, however, that operations of the perfecting virtues are likewise revelatory. An example from Scripture: "Now when the

[62] Cf. chap. 2.III.
[63] Cf. chap. 1.III.

centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!' " (Mark 15:39). Actions can be revelatory, providing the content necessary for a confession that manifests faithful belief. Therefore, the life of moral virtue formed by charity is a manifestation of God's revelation. Divine Nature is communicated to others through the cooperation of the graced agent's participation (i.e., through operations done *ex caritate*). As such, we can say that a graced human nature is an instrument of God.

Bearing this in mind, we can return to Aquinas's treatment of grace to describe the relationship between a person operating *ex caritate* and that person's community. We recall the following passage:

> And thus there is a twofold grace: one whereby man himself is united to God, and this is called "sanctifying grace" [*gratia gratum faciens*]; the other is that whereby one man cooperates with another in leading him to God, and this gift is called "gratuitous grace" [*gratia gratis data*], since it is bestowed on a man beyond the capability of nature, and beyond the merit of the person. But whereas it is bestowed on a man, not to justify him, but rather that he may cooperate in the justification of another, it is not called sanctifying grace. And it is of this that the Apostle says (1 Corinthians 12:7): "And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto utility," i.e. of others.[64]

Here, Aquinas describes how the actions of others are the instruments whereby a person is justified (i.e., made pleasing to God through *gratia gratum faciens*). Insofar as our operations done *ex caritate* are the *result* of the operations of others, our operations are the manifestation of *gratia gratum faciens*. On the other hand, insofar as those same operations are the *cause* of the operations of others, our operations are the manifestation of non-sanctifying *gratia gratis data*. Hence, Aquinas provides us with two ways of describing the same operations. These two ways of speaking allow us to acknowledge that our participation in the Divine Nature is both a matter of being operated on and cooperating with God's operation on others. Just as much as God saves individuals through salvation history, that individual's embodied spiritual life manifests the salvation history by which God

[64] S.T. I.II.111.1c.

saves the world. So, while I can do nothing to save myself (Aquinas is not guilty of advancing a soteriology of works righteousness), by virtue of my salvation I am responsible for the salvation of others. God saves me through others, and God saves others through me.

When we reflect divinity, we preach the objects of faith in a way that helps those in our communities. Our moral living becomes an instrumental mirror that provides an experience of God to the world. In addition to self-formation, acts of perfecting virtue form our communities. Just as a good preacher takes into account the particularity of her listeners, however, we must take into account the particularity of the community we are engaging when we strive to reflect divinity. The particular shape of our moral lives is an object of faith to those around us. Insofar as we "preach the propositions" of faith through our moral lives, we are mediating the sanctifying grace that moves the free will of our neighbor. Put differently, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, the ethical life of the Church signifies and implements the salvific will of God.

Insofar as the moral virtues constitute the shape of the unity of the mystical body of Christ, as well as the particular shape of the individual paths of Christian wayfarers, we must say that human beings relate to their final end, not simply through their interior desire for God. Actually knowing and loving God involves moral operation done *ex caritate* in the context of a community. The moral virtues make up the shape of the unity of the mystical body of Christ, as well as the particular shape of the individual paths of Christian wayfarers. In the exercise of moral virtue, we find the historical manifestation of charity that, through its extension to others, becomes the gratuitous grace whereby we cooperate in the justification and sanctification of humankind. At the heart of this chapter is the fact that embodiment precludes any isolation and reification of the human person's "interior." I repeat our thesis from this chapter's introduction: The journey to God that constitutes the spiritual life cannot be properly or adequately understood as the journey of an individual. Any description of a personal union with God (i.e., the love of charity) necessarily implies the manifestation of community through the exercise of moral virtue. Simply put, *my* union *with* Christ is inseparable from and ordered toward the *community's* unity *as* Christ. The union of charity that we have with our Final End is always the result of our relationship to the world around us, because God has freely chosen to love

us according to our embodied and communal nature. Or, as Pope Benedict XVI has written so eloquently:

> We should recall that no man is an island, entire of itself. Our lives are involved with one another, through innumerable interactions they are linked together. No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, do and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better and for worse. . . . Our hope is always essentially also hope for others; only thus is it truly hope for me too. As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: how can I save myself? We should also ask: what can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them too the star of hope may rise?[65]

III. Grammars of Grace and Virtue

In these last three chapters, I retrieved two grammars that depend on one another. The grammar of grace that we retrieved in chapter 2 provides a particular pattern of talking about the relationship between God and human action. The grammar of grace is primarily founded on the category of participation. The grammar of virtue, then, allows us to speak about participation in the Divine Nature (i.e., grace) in terms of *particular* human action. By appealing to theological virtues, we are able to talk about the gratuitous nature of that participation insofar as the emphasis is placed on the operation of God moving the intellect and the will. By appealing to moral virtues, we are able to talk about the cooperative nature of participation insofar as the emphasis is placed on the essential forms (i.e., the perfecting virtues) whereby we might dispose ourselves and our communities to God's friendship.

The purpose of retrieving these grammars is twofold. First, based on Aquinas's treatment of sacramental signification that I treated in the first chapter, thicker descriptions of grace and charity are needed. The retrieval of these two grammars has been in service of the ensuing examination of Aquinas's sacramental theology and eucharistic theology. In order to understand Aquinas's treatment of the sacraments, we must understand how he is envisioning the spiritual life.

[65] Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi* 48.

Second, I retrieved these grammars to make clear the connection between grace and virtue. At the heart of this retrieval is a desire to emphasize the fact that, at least in Aquinas's treatment, language about grace and virtuous action are descriptions of God's single self-gift. Participation, sanctification, justification, theological virtues, and perfecting virtues are interrelated terms that allow us to describe the single gift of God's self in various ways. These grammars, then, multiply the perspectives from which we can describe God's life in our lives, thereby providing insights that mutually enrich one another.

I chose to treat grace, theological virtue, and moral virtue in that order so as to (1) emphasize the theological foundation of Aquinas's approach to virtue while simultaneously (2) emphasizing the embodied and historical nature of God's self-gift. The more we try to disembody our friendship with God, the more difficult we make it to increase in charity and, simultaneously, the more difficult we make it to cooperate in the salvation of the world. For Aquinas, preoccupation with contextualized exercises of virtue is preoccupation with our relationship with God.

Throughout this book, I use the phrase "the *embodied* spiritual life" because communal moral living done out of charity is the source and summit of the spiritual life. Anyone who, hearing this claim, replies, "I thought the Eucharist was the source and summit of our faith," has created a false dichotomy. As we will see in the following chapters, the Eucharist is itself an act of the perfecting virtues through which we dispose ourselves for an increase in charity.

In the following chapters, I will return to the *Tertia Pars* to examine the role the Eucharist plays in the embodied spiritual life. Specifically, I will describe the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ in terms of grace and virtue. By applying the retrieved grammars to Aquinas's sacramental theology, we will see that the *Secunda Pars* is helpful for contemporary sacramental theology, because it precludes any desire to construct a sacramental theology that would isolate sacraments from moral engagement with the cultural particularities without which sacraments cease to have meaning.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Eucharist Nourishing the Embodied Spiritual Life

Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in the full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

—Hebrews 10:24-25

Having mined the *Secunda Pars* for ways of speaking about grace and virtue, the remaining chapters of this book will return to Aquinas's *Tertia Pars* and his explicit treatment of the sacraments. The thesis of the current chapter is that the eucharistic theology found in the *Tertia Pars* is intimately connected to Aquinas's concerns for the life of the Church. To use the terminology of our retrieved grammars, Aquinas presents the Eucharist as an integral part of the embodied spiritual life insofar as the Eucharist affects the Church's participation in the Divine Nature by increasing the Church's unity.

This thesis will be defended in three steps. First, I will examine the relationship between Aquinas's christological treatise and the

pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* that was treated in chapter 3. Specifically, I will argue that, by means of his life, Jesus Christ establishes the possibility of *theosis*. Next, I will turn to Aquinas's sacramental theology to explain how the sacraments work as signs that provoke us to follow the way that is Christ. Finally, I will show how the Eucharist is itself the Church's nourishment for the way.

I. Jesus Establishes the Way

In chapter 1, I quoted Bernhard Blankenhorn as saying that Aquinas's sacramental theology must be understood through the lens of his Christology.[1] The present section will seek to avoid the danger that results from *beginning* with Aquinas's Christology. Namely, I am trying to avoid a christomonistic reading of Aquinas's sacramental theology. Such readings easily degenerate into the types of sacramental theologies rightly bemoaned by de Lubac and Chauvet.[2] It is, however, my hope that, in light of the second and third chapters of this book, the reader will have little trouble envisioning an undergirding pneumatology (i.e., the theologies of grace and virtue we retrieved from the *Secunda Pars*) that makes such christomonistic readings of the *Tertia Pars* impossible.

To begin our consideration of how the Eucharist relates to the spiritual life, I will provide a description of how Christ's presence is salvific. In the current section, I will relate the pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* with the christological soteriologies of the *Tertia Pars*. Contextualizing these soteriologies will provide a trinitarian framework for understanding the following sacramental theology and eucharistic theology. The embodied life of Jesus Christ, particularly in the culminating act of his passion, has opened up for humankind a "new and living way" (Heb 10:20). Subsequently, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we are moved to follow the way established by Christ.

1. Paschal Mystery as Sacrificial Sign of God's Love

In the first article of the first question of the *Tertia Pars*, Aquinas writes the following regarding the fittingness of the incarnation: "It

[1] Cf. chap. 1.II.
[2] Cf. chap. 1.I.

would seem most fitting that by visible things the invisible things of God should be made known."[3] From the outset, Aquinas grounds the *Tertia Pars* in a theology of revelation. Put differently, human knowledge of God is always at the heart of Aquinas's christological considerations. Hence, when considering Christ's "manner of living" (*modo conversationis*), Aquinas frames his discussion in terms of preaching the divine truth.

> Christ's manner of life had to be in keeping with the end of His Incarnation, by reason of which He came into the world. Now He came into the world, first, that He might publish the truth [*manifestandum veritatem*]. . . . Hence it was fitting not that He should hide Himself by leading a solitary life, but that He should appear openly and preach in public. . . . Secondly, He came in order to free men from sin. . . . And hence, as Chrysostom says, "although Christ might, while staying in the same place, have drawn all men to Himself, to hear His preaching, yet He did not do so; thus giving us the example to go about and seek those who perish, like the shepherd in his search of the lost sheep, and the physician in his attendance on the sick." Thirdly, He came that by Him "we might have access to God."[4]

In this passage, Aquinas highlights the revelatory character of the reasons for the incarnation. Even the second reason, which might not be immediately recognized as concerned with revelation (i.e., freeing humankind from sin), is described in terms of preaching. As if to avoid unnecessary complications, Aquinas provides a simple summary: "Christ's action is our instruction."[5] Far from reducing the incarnation to the content of Christ's verbal preaching, Aquinas is emphasizing that the entirety of Christ's life communicates divinity. But if we are to avoid idolatry, we must further qualify these claims.

As Aquinas points out when discussing the object of faith, what is seen cannot be believed.[6] Recalling our discussion of belief in chapter 2, the object of faith is always presented in a human mode so that what is believed is made accessible through signs that point beyond

[3] S.T. III.1.sc.
[4] S.T. III.40.1c.
[5] S.T. III.40.1.ad3.
[6] S.T. II.II.1.5c.

themselves.[7] Through signs (e.g., the articles of the Creed, the sacraments, etc.) the Word of God is communicated to humankind. Put differently, Aquinas has a theology of God's transcendence.

While God's transcendence is a function of our natural (in)ability to know God, this theology of transcendence is so fundamental that even the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, points beyond his own embodied life to the divine life of the Trinity. Hence, Aquinas says: "Things concerning Christ's human nature, and the sacraments of the Church, or any creatures whatever, come under faith, in so far as by them we are directed to God, and in as much as we assent to them on account of the Divine Truth."[8] Things pertaining to the human nature of Christ (e.g., his body and blood, his speaking, his actions, etc.) are not the final object of faith but rather point beyond themselves. Every aspect of the incarnation points beyond itself to God *as our Final End*. Emphasizing that God is believed in as Final End is important because such an emphasis refuses to disconnect the content of revelation from the dynamic character of the spiritual life. The Word of God is incarnate (i.e., communicated in a human mode) so that we might move toward our Final End. Hence, Aquinas's Christology is rooted in a soteriology of *theosis*.

Before turning to Aquinas's treatment of the passion, I would like to recall the genre of the *Summa* in order to help us make sense of the plurality we find in the *Tertia Pars*. Aquinas presents multiple soteriologies in the *Tertia Pars*. It would be a mistake to assume that these soteriologies are seamlessly systematized into a coherent whole. Recalling that the *Summa Theologiae* is written as an introductory text meant to expose theology students to the depth of the tradition, it is unsurprising to see that Aquinas regularly provides multiple descriptions of a particular issue. For example, in question 46, Aquinas lists five ways "that man was delivered by Christ's Passion."[9] Again, in question 49, he lists three ways that "Christ's Passion is the proper cause of forgiveness."[10] Throughout his soteriological considerations, we find Aquinas stacking up ways in which the Christian tradition has spoken about Christ's salvific efficacy. Aquinas justifies this plu-

[7] Cf. chap. 2.III.
[8] S.T. II.II.1.1.ad1.
[9] Cf. S.T. III.46.3.
[10] Cf. S.T. III.49.1.

rality by asserting the superiority of using several ways to bring about a single goal.[11] In essence, Aquinas refuses to limit himself to a single interpretation of the tradition. Therefore, while I will now describe Aquinas's soteriology largely in terms of our retrieved grammars, I do not mean to insinuate that Aquinas denies the validity of other soteriological language. However, here I argue that Aquinas has a preferred grammar for soteriology that runs throughout both the *Secunda Pars* and the *Tertia Pars.*

This preferred grammar for soteriology is one based on the revelatory purpose of the incarnation whereby the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ is understood as a sacrificial sign of God's love. Hence, Aquinas notes:

> Even Christ's Passion, although denoted by other figurative sacrifices, is yet a sign of something to be observed by us, according to 1 Peter 4:1: "Christ therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sins: that now he may live the rest of his time in the flesh, not after the desires of men, but according to the will of God."[12]

The passion of Christ points beyond itself to a way of living *ex caritate* through the perfecting virtues. Indeed, Aquinas emphasizes the fact that Christ's passion is only pleasing to God as an act of charity.[13] "But Christ obtained a result from His passion, not as by virtue of the sacrifice, which is offered by way of satisfaction, but by the very devotion with which out of charity He humbly endured the passion."[14] As such, the passion is a sacrificial sign of God's love at work in the world. When Aquinas lists the reasons that Christ's passion is rightly called salvific, first among the reasons is that "man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred [*provocatur*] to love him in return, and herein lies the perfection of human salvation."[15] Hence, as an operation done *ex caritate*, the passion is a sign

[11] Cf. S.T. III.46.3.ad1.
[12] S.T. III.48.3.ad2.
[13] S.T. III.48.3c.
[14] S.T. III.22.4.ad2.
[15] S.T. III.46.3c.

of charity that provokes us into a way of living (i.e., an embodied spiritual life) that is "the perfection of human salvation."

2. *Provocation as Possibility of* Theosis

In question 49, Aquinas points out that the passion of Christ is said to cause our justification because it provokes (*provocantis*) the charitable movement of our will through which "we procure pardon for our sins."[16] As we saw in chapter 3, our justification (i.e., the forgiveness of sins) is a function of being turned and moved toward God.[17] Hence, as an act of perfect charity, the passion causes our justification by provoking the movement of our minds toward God and away from sin. Put differently, the passion causes our friendship with God by provocatively proclaiming God's love for us.

As an act of charity that provokes our charity, Jesus' sacrifice is the cause of our justification. As with all human operations done *ex caritate*, however, Jesus' acts of charity are embodied insofar as they are commanded operations of moral virtue. Disembodied charity does not provoke anyone. In the previous chapter, I emphasized the codependence and inseparability of the moral and theological virtues. Due to this codependence, provoking charity also requires provoking the moral virtues. If Christ's passion provokes our charity, it does so in a specified manner. Hence, Aquinas's second reason that Christ's passion is rightly called salvific: "because thereby He set us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues displayed in the Passion, which are requisite for man's salvation."[18] Through the operations of Christ's moral virtues, his charity is made known to us as an embodied and virtuous way to be followed. Put differently, Christ shows us what it looks like to operate *ex caritate* so that we might go and do likewise.

It remains to be seen, however, exactly how this provocation occurs. Specifically, how is it that the movement of our charity is attributed to the efficacy of Christ's charity? Aquinas provides us with a two-part answer. "Christ's Passion, although corporeal, has yet a spiritual effect from the Godhead united: and therefore it secures its efficacy

[16] S.T. III.49.1c.
[17] Cf. chap. 3.II.1.
[18] S.T. III.46.3c.

by spiritual contact—namely, by faith and the sacraments of faith."[19] The spiritual effect of the passion (i.e., the provocation of our embodied love for God) is brought about by "spiritual contact." This demands further explanation. First, Aquinas speaks of this efficacious spiritual contact in terms of application (*applicare*) through faith:

> Christ's Passion is applied to us even through faith, that we may share in its fruits. . . . But the faith through which we are cleansed from sin is not "lifeless faith" [*fides informis*], which can exist even with sin, but "faith living" through charity [*fides formata per caritatem*]; that thus Christ's Passion may be applied to us, not only as to our minds [*intellectum*], but also as to our hearts [*affectum*]. And even in this way sins are forgiven through the power of the Passion of Christ.[20]

As a sign that points beyond itself to God's love for us, the passion provokes our response of faith that is formed by charity. Simply put, "application," "provocation," and "spiritual contact" are ways of speaking about causality based on signification. When, through faith formed by charity, we believe in the truth revealed through the passion, we are justified. That is, we are turned and moved toward our Final End, not solely as the truth to be known (i.e., the isolated act of lifeless faith), but as the good to be done (i.e., the active life lived *ex caritate*).[21]

For those of us who were not firsthand witnesses to the sacrificial consummation of Christ's life, however, some form of mediation is needed. Put differently, we need to be told the Good News. "Since Christ's Passion preceded, as a kind of universal cause of the forgiveness of sins, it needs to be applied to each individual for the cleansing of personal sins. Now this is done by baptism and penance and the

[19] S.T. III.48.6.ad2.

[20] S.T. III.49.1.ad5.

[21] If this description of the efficacy of the passion seems to lack power, consider the consequences of standing in a large crowd and screaming, "Fire!" or "Free money!" There is a reason that inciting a mob is a serious crime. Similarly, there is a reason parents are concerned with the environment of their children. Personalities are forged and formed by the signs that surround a person. The signs we use to communicate are wrought with efficacious power. Hence, we ought not apply the reductive criticism that provocation is merely a soteriology of a moral exemplar. Rather, provocation is fundamental to the way subjectivities are formed.

other sacraments."[22] As signs that provide knowledge of Christ's salvific life, the sacraments apply the passion to us in an efficacious manner. Simply put, sacramental signs signify the unique sacrificial sign of Christ's passion; sacraments are signs of The Sign. Even when communicated through sacramental signification, the passion is still primarily applied through living faith.

This central role of living faith allows us to return to our previous treatment of the theological virtues. This will allow us to describe the passion's efficacy in terms of the Holy Spirit's movement. If this christological soteriology is based on signification that provokes the response of theological virtue, then, based on our retrieved grammars, it is easy to see that the Holy Spirit is intimately active in our salvation. The movement of the theological virtues is the formally effective indwelling of the Holy Spirit who is perpetually actualizing our share in the Image of God. Hence, speaking about the role of the theological virtues in the spiritual life is tantamount to speaking about the salvific action of the Holy Spirit.[23] To say that the passion is applied in faith is to say that through Christ's revelatory life the Christian individual comes to believe in and move toward God as the Final End. The embodied movement of the theological virtues is our response to the sacrificial sign of the passion. Put simply, the sacrificial death of Christ causes *theosis* by way of provocation. On the cross we see an irrevocable invitation to friendship with God. It is the Holy Spirit (i.e., the external principle that actualizes the Image of God in us, moving us to know and love God) who moves us from within to respond to Christ's provocation.[24] Through Christ, we are offered salvation as a way to be walked, and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ.

The thrust of this christological section has been to show that the Christomonism often read in the *Tertia Pars* is a result of reading only the *Tertia Pars*. In the *Tertia Pars* we see soteriologies stacked up on top of one another. However, when read through the lens of the pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* that emerges from the *Secunda Pars*, we can see that the provocative role of the incarnation grounds Aquinas's christological soteriology of sacrifice. Speaking about

[22] S.T. III.49.1.ad4.
[23] Cf. chap. 3.II.2 and 3.IV.
[24] Cf. chap. 2.II.1.

salvation in terms of provoking charity precludes any charge of Christomonism, because charity is always a movement of the Holy Spirit. The pneumatology that is the foundation for Aquinas's soteriology must be maintained. As I said in the preceding subsection, even Aquinas's Christology is rooted in a soteriology of *theosis*. Now we can see more clearly that Aquinas's christological soteriologies are rooted in a pneumatological soteriology of *theosis*. Rather than a christomonistic, static, hierarchical economy of grace production, Aquinas's soteriology is a deeply trinitarian, dynamic, communal drama of graced participation.

Further, reading through the lens of a pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* ensures the inclusion of human cooperation as a starting point for the ensuing sacramental theology. Rather than a pseudo-Anselmian flow chart of reified grace cascading down an ecclesial hierarchy through sacramental channels, we can envision a *communal* pilgrimage established by Christ and motivated by the Spirit who moves us to our Final End. According to Aquinas, the passion is a provocative sign given for the good of the Church. While provocation is the possibility of *theosis*, Aquinas is clear that we are called *as a community* to the "new and living way that [Christ] opened for us": "To be 'a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle' is the ultimate end to which we are brought by the Passion of Christ."[25]

II. Sacraments Show the Way

If Christ is the way of salvation, how do we come to follow that way? As I said in the previous section, for those of us who were not firsthand witnesses to the sacrificial consummation of Christ's life, some form of mediation is needed. We need to be told the Good News. "Since Christ's Passion preceded, as a kind of universal cause of the forgiveness of sins, it needs to be applied to each individual for the cleansing of personal sins. Now this is done by baptism and penance and the other sacraments."[26] As signs that provide knowledge of Christ's salvific life, the sacraments apply the passion to us in an efficacious manner. Simply put, sacramental signs signify the unique sacrificial sign of Christ's passion; sacraments are signs of

[25] S.T. III.8.3.ad2.
[26] S.T. III.49.1.ad4.

The Sign. In this section, I will show that, just as Jesus Christ was a provocative sign that invited us into a way of living *ex caritate*, sacramental signification is a means to making Christ present in a manner that seeks to transform us into Christ.

In order to understand how sacramental signification brings about this transformation, I will focus on the relationship between the sacraments and Jesus Christ, as well as the relationship between the sacraments and the Holy Spirit. To that end, I first turn to the following passage in which Aquinas directly addresses both of these relationships:

> As in the person of Christ the humanity causes our salvation by grace, the Divine power being the principal agent, so likewise in the sacraments of the New Law, which are derived from Christ, grace is instrumentally caused by the sacraments, and principally by the power of the Holy Ghost working in the sacraments.[27]

Sacramental grace is caused principally by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a crucial passage for properly understanding the trinitarian nature of the sacraments. As with Aquinas's christological considerations, his sacramental theology is also rooted in a pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* wherein we are made to participate in the Divine Nature through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The way established by Christ is made known to us through the working of the Holy Spirit.

1. Writing the Signs through Religion

Without going into superfluous repetition of the material covered in the first chapter, here I reiterate that a sacrament is a separated instrument that is used by God to sanctify humankind.[28] Put differently:

> The saving power must needs be derived by the sacraments from Christ's Godhead through His humanity. . . . By His Passion [Christ] inaugurated the Rites of the Christian Religion by offer-

[27] S.T. I.II.112.1.ad2.

[28] Cf. chap. 1.III.

> ing "Himself—an oblation and a sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2). Wherefore it is manifest that the sacraments of the Church derive their power specially from Christ's Passion, the virtue of which is in a manner united to us by our receiving the sacraments.[29]

To put this in terms of signification, the separate instrument (sacramental signs) works by means of a united instrument (Christ's humanity) that works by means of the efficient cause (God). The sacraments derive their power from Jesus Christ insofar as a sign's power comes from what it signifies. So, when Aquinas says that the sacraments derive their power from the passion of Christ, this derivation should be understood in terms of signification.

The sacraments signify more than the fact of Christ's passion, however. Just as the passion itself was a consummation of a revelatory life, the sacraments work together to provide knowledge of the way that Christ established through his sacrificial life.

> A sacrament properly speaking is that which is ordained to signify our sanctification. In which three things may be considered; viz. the very cause of our sanctification, which is Christ's passion; the form of our sanctification, which is grace and the virtues; and the ultimate end of our sanctification, which is eternal life. And all these are signified by the sacraments. Consequently a sacrament is a sign that is both a reminder of the past, i.e. the passion of Christ; and an indication of that which is effected in us by Christ's passion, i.e. grace; and a prognostic, that is, a foretelling of future glory.[30]

The sacraments sanctify us by giving us provocative knowledge of the cause, form, and end of the spiritual life. Simply put, they show us the way. At the heart of the way is grace and virtue because, as we have seen in our previous chapters, these constitute the spiritual life of the wayfarer. Included in this signification, however, is also the whence and the whither of the way.

We are left, then, with Aquinas saying that the sacraments derive their power from Jesus Christ. But Aquinas also clearly emphasizes

[29] S.T. III.62.5c.
[30] S.T. III.60.3c.

the fact that sacramental grace is caused "principally by the power of the Holy Ghost working in the sacraments."[31] While it is clear that the relationship between Jesus and the sacraments is a matter of signification, it remains to be seen how the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in the sacraments.

Simply put, the Rites of the Christian Religion are carried out through human operations; the sacraments are acts of moral virtue. Specifically, they are acts of the virtue of religion. Because I will return to a more in-depth discussion of the virtue of religion in our final chapter, here I emphasize that religion is a virtue annexed to justice. In other words, it is a virtue of the will whereby we choose to give to God what God is due. Specifically, religion is a virtue concerned with giving God the worship that God is due.[32] But what is the purpose of this worship?

> We employ words, in speaking to God, not indeed to make known our thoughts to Him Who is the searcher of hearts, but that we may bring ourselves and our hearers to reverence Him. Consequently we need to praise God with our lips, not indeed for His sake, but for our own sake; since by praising Him our devotion is aroused [*affectus excitatur*] towards Him, according to Psalm 49:23: "The sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me, and there is the way by which I will show him the salvation of God." And forasmuch as man, by praising God, ascends in his affections to God, by so much is he withdrawn from things opposed to God. . . . The praise of the lips is also profitable to others by inciting their affections [*affectus provocetur*] towards God.[33]

How, then, does this worship provoke our devotion and affection for God? When this worship consists of the sacraments, it provokes us by signifying the cause, form, and end of salvation, that is, the past, present, and future of the spiritual life called "The Way."

Hence, signification is the purpose of sacramental acts of religion. The sacraments are meant to give us knowledge of the causes of our salvation: the virtues being the formal cause. From the previous chapter's discussion of the increase of charity, it should be clear that the

[31] S.T. I.II.112.1.ad2.
[32] Cf. S.T. II.II.81.2-4.
[33] S.T. II.II.91.1c.

moral virtues are not accidental to our salvation. We owe God the fruitful proclamation of his revelation, the virtues being part of that content. Hence, as operations of religion, the sacraments need to communicate the virtues (theological and moral) so that we might come to know our salvation (i.e., the way of the Lord). In signifying the virtues, the sacraments need to signify in a way that allows us to live *ex caritate*. The sacraments provoke our response *and* show us how to respond. The sacraments teach us to walk just as much as they tell us where we are going and whence we've come. A description of *how* the sacraments accomplish this task will be the focus of the following chapter.

With regard to clarifying the role of the Holy Spirit, the point I emphasize here is that sacramental signification is an operation of the perfecting virtues. As acts done *ex caritate*, the sacraments are manifestations of the Spirit given to the Church unto the utility of others.[34] In titling this subsection "Writing the Signs through Religion," I use the term "writing" to imply embodiment of a sign. As an operation of religion (i.e., an operation of perfecting virtue), a sacrament is writing the Word of God with our bodies. So, one way of describing how the sacraments work principally by the power of the Holy Spirit is to say that they are operations of the perfecting virtues, by which we reflect divinity in a provocative manner. As such, the Church embodies the signs of God's love for the world. We write the sacraments through the virtue of religion, because the Holy Spirit writes the sacraments through our cooperation.

2. Reading the Signs through Faith

As signs written through religion and meant to provoke friendship with God, the sacraments need to be read with a mind moved by the Holy Spirit. Put differently, the theological virtues are the proper disposition of a sacramental reader. Because the passion is always applied through faith (even when mediated through the sacraments[35]), the efficacy of the sacraments is primarily a function of the Holy Spirit moving the minds of those who read sacramental signs. As Aquinas says, the operations of religion are done to provoke our

[34] Cf. S.T. I.II.111.1c.

[35] S.T. III.48.6.ad2.

devotion and affection and therefore are said to help us in the spiritual life. As was pointed out in the above discussion of the passion and provocation, however, the provocation of our love for God is always made efficacious through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The movement of the theological virtues is the formally effective indwelling of the Holy Spirit who is perpetually actualizing our share in the Image of God.

Hence, we are provided with another way of describing the role of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments: we read the sacraments through faith. By actualizing our image of creation, the Holy Spirit moves us to know and love God through the mediation of sacramental signification. Put differently, through participation in the Divine Nature, the human person is moved to recognize and respond to God's friendship, an invitation that is offered through the Rites of Christian Religion. Hence, when titling this section "Reading the Signs through Faith" my use of "reading" implies influence on the reader. To read the sacraments is to respond to their signification. Put differently, when we are shown the way, we respond by following it.

In our daily lives, we often read texts by simply passing our eyes over the written words. After thirty minutes of reading this way, we suddenly realize that we have retained nothing. Additionally, we can also read with a hermeneutic of suspicion born of a personal bias that closes our minds to the text's influences. But celebrating a sacrament as a subject of charity is like reading a text with a hermeneutic of charity. We allow the text to form us for the better. We are willing to hear the One who longs to speak to us. With sacraments, this means reading in a way that allows the ritual to provoke our charitable response. Reading the sacraments through faith allows us to reflect the divinity that is seen in the sacraments. Our lives become visibly marked by our reading of the sacraments. When the sacraments signify the virtuous form of our salvation, a sacramental reader will seek to adopt that form.

It must be said that signification need not be instantaneously effective in provoking this response. As with all reading, sacramental reading does not need to happen immediately. One of my high school English teachers made his students memorize poetry. When I memorized and recited these poems, I became a writer who embodied these texts, but I would often come to realize the meaning of these stanzas years later. It took me a long time to become a reader whose life was

influenced by the words I was writing. Delayed reading is not less meaningful. This sense of reading is the foundation for properly understanding *ex opere operato* in terms of signification. *Ex opere operato* need not be envisioned as denoting an instantaneous mechanism. The more we write the sacraments the more we are disposed to read them. When we develop patterns of religious actions, we are disposing ourselves to an actual increase in the faithful charity whereby we are sacramental readers who reflect divinity. Simply put, reading is a gratuitous gift.

The biggest problem with sacramental theologies based on *ex opere operato* is our inability, as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin put it, to trust in the slow work of God. Almost all appeals to this iteration of sacramental efficacy are rooted in our desire for instantaneous mechanisms of control, not just of God, but of those who are sanctified.[36] Preoccupation with fidelity to rubrics and sacramental validity is often indicative of wanting to remove the cooperation of the one who is sanctified. Even if we cooperate in the sanctification of others by writing the sacraments, this does not remove the need for their cooperation in reading the sacraments. This is why the Christian tradition has a rich history of mystagogical catechesis. Beginning with the Gospel of John's Bread of Life Discourse and extending throughout Christian tradition, disciples of Christ have needed and received help in reflecting on their experiences of the sacraments so that those experiences might bear fruit in their lives. To borrow the terminology of Louis-Marie Chauvet, we must be patient and let the Holy Spirit verify sacramental grace with our lives. We must trust in the slow work of God. Mysteries are gradually discovered. Love is patiently made. In light of the fact that the efficacy of Christ's passion is applied through faith, the sacraments work principally through the power of the Holy Spirit because it is through the Spirit that the signs are made effective in our lives.

[36] Cf. Bruce Morrill, "Sign of Reconciliation and Conversion? Differing Views of Power—Ecclesial, Sacramental, Anthropological—among Hierarchy and Laity," *Theological Studies* 75 (September 2014): 585–612. Here, Morrill provides careful consideration of how disciplinary use of power determines the manner in which sacramental efficacy is imagined.

3. Graced Cooperation

The Holy Spirit's power is at work in the sacraments in two ways. First, as operations of religion, the sacraments are manifestations of the Spirit's work in the life of the Church. As such, the Church reflects divinity to the world. All sacramental celebrations are a gift from the Spirit who moves us. Second, as signs of our salvation, the sacraments provoke the movement of the virtues within us. They move us to better reflect divinity by moving us on the way established by Christ. In my own words, the Holy Spirit allows us to be sacramental writers and sacramental readers. So, we can say that, for Aquinas, the sacraments derive their power from the passion insofar as a sign's power comes from what it signifies. On the other hand, the sacraments derive their power from the Spirit insofar as the Church is moved by the Spirit to both write and read the sacraments. Hence, the pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* grounds this sacramental theology of provocative signification.

The sacraments show the way in a provocative manner. Through operations of religion we embody (i.e., write) God's invitation to friendship that was offered once and for all in Jesus Christ. This is all accomplished through the Holy Spirit; just as any subsequent reading (i.e., operations done *ex caritate*) is also done through the Spirit. Hence, as I said in the second chapter, grace begins with human action (the historically mediated proclamation of revelation) and culminates in human action (the active participation that constitutes the embodied spiritual life). Simultaneously, grace begins with divine action (the self-communication of God) and culminates in divine action (the operation of the Holy Spirit within us).[37]

As we saw in chapter 4, grace can be described as sanctifying (*gratia gratum faciens*) and non-sanctifying (*gratia gratis data*).[38] The former is grace that makes an individual pleasing to God, effecting the personal sanctification of that individual. The latter is grace whereby people cooperate in the sanctification of others. Similarly, the participation in the Divine Nature that is the celebration of the sacraments can also be described simultaneously in these two ways. Hence, sacraments are simultaneously two types of grace. As sacramental

[37] Cf. chap. 2.IV.
[38] Cf. chap. 4.II.3.

readers, we are sanctified by the sacraments and are moved to love God more deeply. Hence, the sacraments bring about our salvation and are rightly said to cause sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*). On the other hand, by embodying the sacraments through operations of religion, the Church is cooperating in the salvation of others. As sacramental writers, we help to move others to friendship with God. As such, sacraments are non-sanctifying grace (*gratia gratis data*). We are called *to* the sacraments so that we might continue to be called *through* the sacraments. We write so that we might read, and we read so that we might write. Both reading and writing the sacraments are the cooperation that manifests our participation in the Divine Nature. We go toward the sacraments to write them with our bodies (to glorify God by proclaiming the Good News), and we come from the sacraments reading them with our lives (to glorify God by living the Good News). God's use of instruments is always cooperative. The grace that causes the spiritual life is salvation history and not an intervention into it.[39]

Sacramental signification, then, is a means to making Christ present in a manner that seeks to transform us into Christ. All the sacraments work together to show us the way who is Christ. To say that we, as a Church, are called to follow Christ is to say that we are called to become Christ. As we will see in the next section, nowhere is this goal more evident than in the celebration of the Eucharist. However, just as the virtues (theological and moral) cannot be isolated, so the sacraments all depend on one another to serve one eucharistic grace. Insofar as they signify our salvation, all the sacraments are about making the Church sinless.[40] Put differently, sacraments form a community that reflects divinity.

> The Church's sacraments are ordained for helping man in the spiritual life. But the spiritual life is analogous to the corporeal, since corporeal things bear a resemblance to spiritual. Now it is clear that just as generation is required for corporeal life, since

[39] Cf. chap. 2.I.1: "The *Tertia Pars* can be called a description of the *reditus* in terms of salvation history. As christologically founded, the *Tertia pars* is still a consideration of particular human action. The actions of Christ, even if they are divine instruments, are human actions. Likewise, the sacraments, even if they are divine instruments, are human actions."

[40] Cf. S.T. III.8.3.ad2.

> thereby man receives life; and growth, whereby man is brought to maturity: so likewise food is required for the preservation of life. Consequently, just as for the spiritual life there had to be Baptism, which is spiritual generation; and Confirmation, which is spiritual growth: so there needed to be the sacrament of the Eucharist, which is spiritual food.[41]

For Aquinas, the sacraments are about beginning and sustaining a communal journey.

III. Eucharist as Nourishment for the Way

In the first chapter of this book, I rehearsed Louis-Marie Chauvet's critique of Aquinas's eucharistic theology.[42] In short, Chauvet (following the thought of Henri de Lubac) highlights Aquinas's tendency toward "a deadly dichotomy" wherein the relationship between the eucharistic body of Christ and the ecclesial body of Christ is obfuscated. This dichotomy is the result of an overemphasis on the relationship between the eucharistic body of Christ and the historical body of Christ. By spending so much time constructing a theory of transubstantiation and limiting his focus to the moment of consecration, Aquinas provides a eucharistic theology that seems to ignore the role of the Church in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The main focus of this section will be to present Aquinas's eucharistic theology in a way that, while affirming these critiques, simultaneously highlights Aquinas's concern for the relationship between the Eucharist and the spiritual life of the Church. Simply put, this section will show that, in Aquinas's sacramental theology, the Eucharist exists to serve the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ. Specifically, it does this by making Christ present through signs that provide knowledge of what it means to live as a unified body of Christ. In the final chapter, I will provide a more sustained consideration of *how* the celebration of the Eucharist relates to the Church. Here, *I am concerned solely with clearly establishing the fact that "being for the Church" is essential to the definition of the Eucharist.*

[41] S.T. III.73.1c.

[42] Cf. chap. 1.I.

1. Writing Christ through the Eucharist

In the first chapter, I emphasized the fact that all the sacraments have a *sacramentum tantum*, a *res et sacramentum*, and a *res tantum*.[43] According to Aquinas, the reality of the sacrament (i.e., the *res tantum*) is its grace, while the signs (i.e., the *sacramentum tantum* and the *res et sacramentum*) exist to cause that reality. As a sign, the Eucharist is charged with signifying our sanctification (i.e., the passion, the perfecting virtues, and eternal life) so as to bring about the sacramental grace that is our sanctification (the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ). In order to examine how eucharistic sacramental signification provokes the unity of the ecclesial body, I return to the first article of question 79 in the *Tertia Pars*. In this article, we see Aquinas list the various eucharistic signs that signify the causes of the Church's unity. Because the Eucharist (1) contains Christ, (2) represents the passion, and (3) is given through food that is (4) a single whole made from many parts, this sacrament provocatively shows the causes of our salvation so that we might be united as an ecclesial body.

In this article, Aquinas shows us that the various signs that make up the moment of consecration *work together* to bring about the grace to which the sacrament is ordained. The unity of the ecclesial body is a result, not solely of the substance of Christ's body and blood, but of the signs through which this sacrament is embodied. Put simply, the Eucharist is made up of signs that rely on one another. I will return more forcefully to this point in the following chapter. For now, I will address Chauvet's criticism regarding Aquinas's claim that the Eucharist is complete at consecration.[44] Here, it will be helpful to quote Aquinas at length:

> A thing is one in perfection, when it is complete through the presence of all that is needed for its end; as a man is complete by having all the members required for the operation of his soul, and a house by having all the parts needful for dwelling therein. And so this sacrament is said to be one. Because it is ordained for spiritual refreshment, which is conformed to corporeal refreshment. Now there are two things required for corporeal refreshment, namely, food, which is dry sustenance, and drink,

[43] Cf. chap. 1.4.

[44] Cf. S.T. III.73.1.ad3 and III.80.12.ad2.

> which is wet sustenance. Consequently, two things concur for the integrity of this sacrament, to wit, spiritual food and spiritual drink, according to John: "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Therefore, this sacrament is materially many, but formally and perfectively one.[45]

When speaking about the completion of the Eucharist, Aquinas chooses the language of nourishment in order to express what is necessary for the sacrament's completion. Put differently, the eucharistic body of Christ (i.e., the *res et sacramentum*) derives (at least in part) its completion from the bread and wine in which it is given (i.e., the *sacramentum tantum*). In order for the eucharistic body of Christ to be received as spiritual nourishment, it is given through food and drink. The completion of a sign is a function of its ability to fruitfully provide the knowledge it is ordained to provide. While the eucharistic body of Christ is the spiritual nourishment that unites the Church, it is only known as such because of the other eucharistic signs that provide its context (i.e., the bread and wine, the words of consecration, etc.). Hence, in the Eucharist, Jesus Christ is present as spiritual nourishment through the various signs that rely on one another to bring the Church to knowledge of the One who is the cause of our salvation.

All this is to say that one cannot isolate the eucharistic body of Christ without undoing its completion. Hence, even when we minimize the bread, remove the wine, place the consecrated host in a bejeweled monstrance, and place that monstrance in a room far away from the eucharistic table, the other eucharistic signs (regardless of how much we try to minimize and ignore them) always remain the necessary conditions for that eucharistic body accomplishing its sanctifying purpose. Without knowledge of the external actions of religion that embody the celebration of the Eucharist, one has no eucharistic body to adore. Every consecrated host bears the marks of the signs that surround it, and by those marks that host means something.[46]

[45] S.T. III.73.2c.

[46] It must be said that, in a largely self-defeating choice, Aquinas unnecessarily limits the actions of religion that he considers in his treatment of the Eucharist. In other words, Chauvet's critique is quite accurate. By focusing so narrowly on the moment of consecration (the dominical words, the minister, the bread and the wine), he ignores other religious actions that write the presence of Christ. Specifically, he

A meal that has been grown in a family garden and prepared with much care over the course of an entire day is able to nourish more than just the body that eats it; such a meal signifies the love that provides a family with its identity. If you bracket that meal, though, providing no knowledge of its sources, its nourishing power is reduced to the metabolic. Similarly, the celebration of the Eucharist causes grace because, through all its signs, it writes the eucharistic body of Christ that is made present as the nourishment who strengthens us to live as Christ lived. In the eucharistic body of Christ, we see the cause, form, and end of our salvation. We see Christ who lived, died, and was raised. As such (i.e., as Christ), it is the sacramental sign *par excellence*.

The eucharistic body of Christ, then, is not the result of a moment in time. It is the result of human cooperation with the Holy Spirit whereby we, through operations of religion, embody those signs that write the provocative presence of Christ. Writing the eucharistic body of Christ is a moral action carried out by the Church. As such, we celebrate the Eucharist as subjects of charity insofar as, out of and in service to our friendship with God, we embody the eucharistic signs that make Christ present. In the following chapter, I will return to a more in-depth consideration of the moral quality of embodying eucharistic signs. For now, it will suffice to reiterate that, insofar as the eucharistic body of Christ is complete as spiritual nourishment, it takes the religious operation of the Church to embody the eucharistic signs that write the presence of Christ *as spiritual nourishment*. Given the written presence of the eucharistic body of Christ, however, there is still the matter of how it nourishes the Church.

2. Spiritually Eating through Faith

While in the previous subsection I was concerned with the eucharistic signs that exist to provoke the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ, here I am shifting my attention to *how* those signs are made effective. Specifically, I will examine what it means to spiritually eat

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ignores those actions that relate the eucharistic body of Christ to the celebrating community that manifests the ecclesial body of Christ, most notably the rite of communion. I will return to a consideration of this limitation later on in this chapter and in great length in the following chapter.

the Eucharist. If the Church writes Christ through eucharistic signs, then it eats Christ by believing through those signs. The eucharistic body of Christ is written as a provocative sign that nourishes us for living out our response. In the previous section, I used the metaphor "reading" to speak about celebrating the sacraments in a way that invites their influence. When applied to the Eucharist, "reading" is better understood as "eating." Employing the term "spiritual eating" is the result of using a grammar that describes the Eucharist as food. Simply put, to read a nourishing sign is to eat food. What, then, is spiritual eating?

In an article titled "Whether the Eucharist Is Necessary for Salvation?" Aquinas sums up in six words what is, for him, at the heart of the Eucharist: "Spiritual food changes man into itself."[47] This intrinsic relationship between the eucharistic body of Christ and the ecclesial body becomes evident in the distinction Aquinas makes between spiritual eating and sacramental eating: "As the perfect is divided against the imperfect, so sacramental eating, whereby the sacrament only is received without its effect, is divided against spiritual eating, by which one receives the effect of this sacrament, whereby a man is spiritually united with Christ through faith and charity."[48] As with the other sacraments, the Eucharist is made effective through faith that is formed by charity. Hence, there is nothing metabolic about spiritually eating the Eucharist. Put differently, the theological virtues are prerequisite for spiritually eating the Eucharist.

To use the language of our previous section, the theological virtues are the proper disposition of a eucharistic eater. If "baptism by desire" is the terminology we use to refer to the justifying action of the Holy Spirit in the mind of someone who has yet to be sacramentally baptized,[49] then "spiritual eating" is the term we use to refer to the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit in the mind of someone who has yet to sacramentally eat the Eucharist. Spiritually eating the Eucharist is accomplished by only those who are justified (i.e., those who have been generated as subjects of the theological virtues), because spiritual eating is dependent on the prior movement of the theological virtues. The Eucharist does not infuse charity. Rather, it presupposes the presence of charity. Hence, we must say that eating the Eucharist

[47] S.T. III.73.3.ad2.
[48] S.T. III.80.1c.
[49] Cf. S.T. III.68.2.

is a gift of the Holy Spirit's movement within us. Put differently, spiritually eating of the Eucharist is the union of charity seeking deeper union. The friends of God come to the Eucharist so that through this meal they might grow in friendship.

Because sacraments are applied through the theological virtues, there is no *need* for sacramental eating.[50] For Aquinas, this spiritual eating whereby the Eucharist is received as effective spiritual nourishment does not require physically eating or drinking the eucharistic species (i.e., the *sacramentum tantum*). Rather, he says that "the effect of the sacrament can be secured by every man if he receives it in desire though not in reality."[51] Spiritual eating is a matter of the Holy Spirit moving us to respond to the provocative presence of Christ. Within the eucharistic theology of Aquinas, anyone who is a subject of charity is capable of eating the Eucharist. Put provocatively, there is no discipline (e.g., exclusion, excommunication, age restrictions, etc.) that can come between Christ and the one who loves him.[52]

This distinction between spiritual eating through faith and sacramental eating with one's mouth allows us to return again to Chauvet's criticism. Aquinas clearly says that the Church's use of the sacrament (i.e., sacramental eating) is not necessary for the completion of the Eucharist.[53] Rather, as I pointed out above, for Aquinas, the Eucharist is completed when all the signs necessary for effecting grace are present.[54] When Aquinas says that the Eucharist is complete at consecration, he is saying that you do not need to eat with your mouth.[55] The consecration of the bread and wine is the completion of the Eucharist not because the eucharistic body of Christ has come into *existence* but because the object of the theological virtues is now *present* to the subjects of charity as their spiritual nourishment.

[50] Aquinas is clear, however, that sacramental eating serves a purpose. I will return to this point in the next chapter.

[51] S.T. III.80.1.ad3.

[52] Aquinas's acute awareness of the distinction between spiritual eating and sacramental eating leads him to say that "the non-baptized are not to be allowed even to see this sacrament." Cf. S.T. III.80.4.ad4.

[53] S.T. III.80.12.ad2.

[54] Cf. S.T. III.73.2c.

[55] To be clear, Aquinas clearly states that actually receiving the consecrated species is preferable. Cf. S.T. III.80.1.ad3. I will return to the relationship between sacramental eating and spiritual eating in the following chapter. For now, I wish to emphasize the fact that sacramental eating is not necessary for the perfection of the sacrament. Again, this puts an emphasis on the role of faith.

Bearing Aquinas's definition of perfection in mind, as well as his description of spiritually eating by faith through signs, I would argue that Aquinas's location of the completion of the sacrament is actually indicative of his desire to avoid a eucharistic body of Christ that is simply an *esse* to be possessed. One cannot spiritually eat of the Eucharist by virtue of the substantial existence of Christ. Rather, for Aquinas, the presence of Christ is an *adesse* grasped only through faith. In short, by saying that the Eucharist is completed through the presence of all the eucharistic signs necessary to know Christ as spiritual nourishment, Aquinas has completed the sacrament at the moment when Christ becomes present for the living faith of the Church. Neither the possession of Christ (i.e., the sacramental eating in which we literally hold on to the substance of Christ) nor the nourishment through Christ (i.e., the spiritual eating through which we are provoked by the presence of Christ) is intrinsic to a complete Eucharist.

So, it is possible to defend Aquinas from Chauvet's critique: the eucharistic body of Christ is described as spiritual nourishment that is present to those who need nourishment. Clearly, the life of the Church is foundational to Aquinas's eucharistic theology. Nevertheless, we must also affirm Chauvet's critique, but on the grounds of Aquinas's own sacramental theology. For Aquinas, the Eucharist is complete at consecration because the spiritual nourishment of the Church is present. But Aquinas also clearly states that "grace is . . . principally [caused] by the power of the Holy Ghost working in the sacraments."[56] Spiritual eating is the work of the Holy Spirit in the community that reads the eucharistic presence of Christ. So, on the one hand, the Eucharist is completed when the Church's nourishment is present. But, on the other hand, the Eucharist is complete before the community is actually nourished. In short, Aquinas's definition of a complete Eucharist excludes eucharistic grace.[57] While this phrasing may cause some eyebrows to raise, this is much less problematic in light of what has already been said about reading the sacraments.[58] A written sign does not need to be read immediately to be effective. Put in terms of nourishment, it takes time to digest what has been eaten.

[56] S.T. I.II.112.1.ad2.
[57] Cf. S.T. III.73.1.ad3.
[58] Cf. chap. 5.II.2.

In the eucharistic theology I have just rehearsed, Aquinas is self-defeating in two main ways. First, Aquinas is working against himself by overemphasizing the distinction between spiritual and sacramental eating. As can be seen from the preceding presentation of spiritual eating, the result is a description of eucharistic efficacy that is overly individualistic. While Aquinas succeeds in emphasizing the role of the theological virtues (and therefore the agency of the Holy Spirit) in the one who is nourished by the Eucharist, he also ends up presenting spiritual eating as the action of an individual Christian and not of a dining community. The following chapter will address this individualism. My purpose in rehearsing this problematic presentation of spiritual eating has been, however, to show that Aquinas's emphasis on the role of faith highlights the pneumatological foundations of his eucharistic theology. Could Aquinas have better integrated his pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* and his eucharistic theology in a way that better addresses the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist? Certainly. Does Aquinas fail to address the role of the Holy Spirit in his eucharistic theology in a way that completely forgets the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist? Certainly not.

Second, in limiting himself to considerations of the moment of consecration, Aquinas is obfuscating his claim that sacramental signs work together to write a provocative presence of Christ. Chauvet is correct to note that Aquinas impoverishes his eucharistic theology (and those theologies that have followed his lead for many years) by excluding a consideration of the other rites that surround the moment of consecration. The more we limit the rites that write Christ, the less faith has to read. Hence, ignoring the proclamation of Scripture, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, the communion rite, or the kiss of peace is to ignore aspects of the Eucharist that write the eucharistic presence of Christ as the provocative object of faith that nourishes our charity. Without denying his tendency toward self-defeat, however, the main point of this chapter is that Aquinas has not removed the Church from his eucharistic theology. Could his eucharistic theology have been better formed to address the relationship between the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body? Certainly. Does Aquinas fail to address the relationship between the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body? Certainly not. As I stated at the beginning of this section: Here, *I am concerned solely with clearly establishing the fact that "being for the Church" is essential to Aquinas's description of the Eucharist.*

Taking these tendencies toward self-defeat as its starting point, the following chapter will be a constructive effort. There, I will gesture toward how Aquinas might have better integrated his grammars of grace and virtue with his sacramental theology. The result will be a liturgical theology that seeks to emphasize the provocative nature of sacramental signification and its influence on the embodied spiritual life.

Throughout this section, I have tried to show how the pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* undergirds Aquinas's eucharistic theology. Just as the passion of Christ is the cause of our justification by virtue of provoking the movement of our charity, so the eucharistic presence of Christ is there to provoke the movement of our charity. The essence of spiritual nourishment is not flesh and blood but Christ's sacrifice of charity that excites our charity. Jesus' flesh and blood did not reveal God. Rather, God was revealed in the way in which Jesus' flesh and blood perfectly embodied charity.[59] Spiritual nourishment exists to form the eater into itself. Hence, in the Eucharist, perfect charity turns imperfect charity into itself. Our liturgies need to be events where the perfect charity of Christ is communicated to our faith as the promise of God's love in which we are called to participate.[60] As spiritual nourishment, the Eucharist exists to form the Church into Christ. Insofar as we read the written Christ in a way that helps us conform to Christ, we come to reflect divinity more perfectly. As such, eucharistic grace is the communal moral reality of the Church virtuously living the embodied spiritual life. *My* union

[59] It is important to bear this distinction in mind when constructing theologies of the ministerial priesthood. Human persons are able to act *in persona Christi* insofar as they have the type of body capable of embodying sacrifices of charity. Hence, we would want to restrict the ministerial priesthood to human beings who are of an age that they are capable of using their body to operate *ex caritate*. However, it would make little sense to restrict the ministerial priesthood to those sharing the bodily accidents of Christ. For example, if we were to restrict the ministerial priesthood to men of Jewish descent who were under the age of thirty-three, such restrictions would misunderstand the revelatory purpose of Jesus' human nature, choosing to fixate on the flesh rather than the charity it embodies.

[60] Again, Aquinas's narrow focus on the moment of consecration limits the liturgical event's ability to communicate Christ's charity. In the following chapter, I will argue that the more we pay attention to the particular shape of the various rites in our event-full liturgies, the better we are able to be nourished by the provocative charity of Christ.

with Christ (i.e., spiritually eating the eucharistic body of Christ) is inseparable from and ordered toward the *Church*'s unity *as* Christ (i.e., the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ).

3. The Unity of the Church: The Fellowship of Sinful Saints

In treating the degrees of charity, Aquinas says, "For at first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity: this concerns beginners, in whom charity has to be fed or fostered lest it be destroyed [*corrumpatur*]."[61] Feeding and fostering charity is a crucial task the Church carries out in every celebration of the Eucharist. Speaking of the Eucharist as spiritual nourishment that serves the unity of the Church implies that the Church needs nourishment. The experience of being a beginner in charity is the experience of being a sinner, of being disordered. Because we are all regularly beginners in charity, we need spiritual food to nourish our development (i.e., to sanctify us). Provocatively put, without the presence of sinners, the Eucharist has no occasion or purpose.

It is important to begin a consideration of eucharistic grace with a consideration of sin because this helps reiterate the fact that the Eucharist is nourishment for a difficult journey and not the reward at the journey's end. Indeed, the pilgrims who most struggle (i.e., we who are beginners in charity) most need to be nourished. Bearing this in mind, we can describe the unity of the ecclesial body in terms of sin. As a community that embodies charity through operations of the perfecting virtues, the Church's life is a participation in the Divine Nature that reflects divinity onto the world.[62] Insofar as that reflection is imperfect, however, we are a sinful Church. We regularly fail in our mission to reflect divinity. While Christ provides us with the way of living in divine friendship, we do not always follow. The more sinful the Church, the less it is united as Christ, and the less it embodies Christ. Hence, Aquinas is clear that the Eucharist always serves a unity that is imperfect.[63] When he says that the unity of the ecclesial

[61] S.T. II.II.24.9c.
[62] Cf. chap. 4.II.3.
[63] S.T. III.79.2c.

body of Christ is the fellowship of the saints,[64] this is not meant to imply a sinless community. In this life, all human members of this *societas sanctorum* are wayfarers.

The fact that the Eucharist is for a sinful Church confronts us with the fact that the Eucharist calls us to a deeper, embodied union with God. The Church always needs to perfect its discipleship. The Eucharist serves the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ by transforming the Church into a community that embodies charity the way that Christ embodied charity. The unity of the ecclesial body, then, is an embodied reality lived out through the virtues. The more we reflect Christ through our discipleship, the more we are a united ecclesial body. Being nourished by the Eucharist (i.e., becoming the Christ we eat) is a matter of ordering ourselves to better reflect divinity. Hence, we consume nourishment that shows us who we are called to be. If the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ is a community of disciples striving to reflect divinity, then the manifestation of eucharistic grace is the fruition of Christ's life: "To be 'a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle' is the ultimate end to which we are brought by the Passion of Christ."[65]

Recalling that Aquinas speaks of grace as an external principle of human action, we must emphasize that the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ is itself an external principle of human action insofar as the Church's moral life is a participation in the Divine Nature that reflects divinity onto the world. As we saw in the fourth chapter, the life of the Church is the gratuitous grace (*gratia gratis data*) whereby we cooperate in the justification of others.[66] Hence, saying that the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ is constituted by its ability to be a salvific sacrament to the world is tantamount to saying that the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ is the grace of God. As the life of this united community, eucharistic grace is virtuously living the spiritual life.

While the Eucharist is ordered toward the spiritual life of the Church, the celebration of the Eucharist is also part of that spiritual life. Insofar as celebrating the Eucharist is a communal act of religion, the Eucharist is a manifestation of eucharistic grace. Put differently,

[64] S.T. III.80.4c.
[65] S.T. III.8.3.ad2.
[66] Cf. chap. 4.II.3.

writing Christ through the Eucharist causes grace *ex opere operato*. When the ecclesial body of Christ, through the movement of the Holy Spirit, writes the eucharistic body of Christ, the unity of that ecclesial body is performed. As such, writing the Eucharist is a participation in the Divine Nature. However, when the ecclesial body of Christ, through the movement of the Holy Spirit, reads the eucharistic body of Christ by becoming Christ more fully, the unity of the ecclesial body is performed through the spiritual life that manifests the *koinonia* of a community.

As operations of religion, the eucharistic signs through which we write Christ are the work of the Holy Spirit who incarnates Christ *through* the flesh of the Church so that Christ might be more perfectly incarnate *in* the flesh of the Church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ is born of human cooperation. This birth, as with the Virgin Birth, is not an end in itself. It is wrought for a purpose: that we might follow the way set forth by Christ and, by following, be divinized. Therefore, we need the Holy Spirit to help us write and eat of this spiritual food that transforms us into Christ, the One who was perfectly full of grace.[67] Hence, as a community we assemble, "not neglecting to meet together," so that we might "consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24-25). "Encouraging one another" through the celebration of the Eucharist, we become the One who is nourishment for the way he established with his life.

In the opening section of the first chapter, I pointed out that Chauvet's critiques of the "deadly dichotomy" can be summarized as lamentations of a loss of a loss.[68] Based on the preceding exposition of Aquinas's sacramental theology, however, one might claim that, for Aquinas, the substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not the abolition of the absence of Christ. To be sure, Aquinas goes to great lengths to point out that Christ (his body, his soul, and the Godhead) is truly present as the result of the eucharistic signs. When understood through the lens of a pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* wherein the Eucharist is a sacramental sign meant to nourish our spiritual life and move us toward our Final End, however, then the Eucharist cannot be said to destroy the loss of Christ brought about by the ascension. Rather, within Aquinas's sacramental

[67] S.T. III.26.2.ad1.

[68] Cf. chap. 1.I.

theology, we celebrate the Eucharist because Christ is the absent end to which we are ordained. The Eucharist does not overcome Christ's absence; it overcomes our inability to grow continually closer to the Final End who is revealed in Christ. So, while Chauvet laments the loss of the loss of Christ so frequently found in preoccupation with the substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist, he finds a fellow mourner in Aquinas. In Aquinas's sacramental theology, the Eucharist is a celebration of the loss of Christ's historical body insofar as the Eucharist is a celebration of Christ's ecclesial body. Far from being a distraction from ecclesial identity, the Eucharist is a provocative sign that confronts the Church with a responsibility to live as Christ for the world.

The Eucharist's role in the embodied spiritual life is to serve the historical and bodily life of the Church. As was pointed out in the first chapter, by identifying eucharistic grace with the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ, Aquinas has made the spiritual life of the Church the purpose of the Eucharist.[69] In fact, the Eucharist cannot exist without prior eucharistic grace. As an operation of religion, the Eucharist is a result of the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ. Not only is the Eucharist *for* the Church, it is also clearly *of* the Church. From the religious actions that mediate God's revelation, to our response through the operations done *ex caritate*, the Eucharist is essentially bound to the embodied spiritual life. The Eucharist serves the spiritual life by deepening our participation in the Divine Nature that is nothing other than the Holy Spirit's effective life in our lives. Thus, the eucharistic theology found in the *Tertia Pars* is intimately connected to Aquinas's concerns regarding the life of the Church. To use the terminology of our retrieved grammars, Aquinas presents the Eucharist as an integral part of the embodied spiritual life insofar as the Eucharist affects the Church's participation in the Divine Nature by increasing the Church's unity.

[69] Cf. chap. 1.V.

CHAPTER SIX

A Liturgical Theology of Right Religion

When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

—1 Corinthians 14:26

The *Tertia Pars* contains sacramental theology that is grounded in Aquinas's concern for the spiritual life of the Church. But the *Tertia Pars* also contains theology that tends to work against the pneumatological soteriology of *theosis* that Aquinas presents in the *Secunda Pars*, using his grammars of grace and virtue. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Tertia Pars* is marked by an individualism and sacramental minimalism that ought not be ignored. The purpose of this final chapter is to use the retrieved grammars of grace and virtue to construct a liturgical theology of right religion that avoids these shortcomings, more fully integrating Aquinas's grammars of grace and virtue into a sacramental theology.

I. A Self-Defeating Tendency

The reason for constructing this liturgical theology of right religion is Aquinas's failure to adequately integrate the *Secunda Pars*'s grammars of grace and virtue with the *Tertia Pars*'s sacramental theology. In the previous chapter, I mentioned that Aquinas has a self-defeating tendency toward individualism and narrowly focuses on the signs he deems essential to the sacraments (i.e., sacramental minimalism).

In this section, I will briefly reflect on these shortcomings that are the occasion for constructing a liturgical theology of right religion.

In the first chapter, I pointed out that Aquinas emphasizes the essential sense of the words used during the celebration of a sacrament. He writes:

> A sacrament may be considered on the part of the sacramental signification. Now Augustine says that "words are the principal signs used by men"; because words can be formed in various ways for the purpose of signifying various mental concepts, so that we are able to express our thoughts with greater distinctness by means of words. And therefore in order to ensure the perfection of sacramental signification it was necessary to determine the signification of the sensible things by means of certain words. For water may signify both a cleansing by reason of its humidity, and refreshment by reason of its being cool: but when we say, "I baptize thee," it is clear that we use water in baptism in order to signify a spiritual cleansing.[1]

In this passage, Aquinas elucidates the relationship between verbal and nonverbal signs. Specifically, words determine the significance of the nonverbal signs by adding greater distinctness to the concepts that are meant to be expressed by the sacrament. If the sacraments exist to communicate provocative knowledge, then words are the most effective aspect of sacramental communication, because they ensure clarity in communication.

Further, Aquinas's preference for words seems to come from an idealized notion of how they function. Throughout question 60, Aquinas turns to considerations of the various ways the words of a sacrament might be spoken. In explaining the efficacy of these words, he appeals to the "essential sense" (*debitus sensus*) that is expressed when a word is used.

> As Augustine says, the word operates in the sacraments "not because it is spoken," i.e. not by the outward sound of the voice, "but because it is believed" in accordance with the sense of the words which is held by faith. And this sense is indeed the same for all, though the same words as to their sound be not used by

[1] S.T. III.60.6c.

> all. Consequently no matter in what language this sense is expressed, the sacrament is complete.[2]

Without entering into a prolonged discussion of what we might call Aquinas's theories of language and epistemology, I simply point out that, for Aquinas, words are employed to communicate mental concepts.[3] These mental concepts can remain unchanged, however, despite variation in the language used to communicate the essential sense. Put differently, words are used to express mental concepts that are prior to the use of the words. Hence, due to the immutability of a sacrament's essential sense, a baptism celebrated in Latin in the year 1280 accomplishes the same result as a baptism celebrated in Greek in the year 280.

Here, Aquinas appears to misunderstand language on two points. First, his emphasis on words underestimates the efficacy of nonverbal signs, specifically in their ability to help determine the significance of verbal signs. For Aquinas, words are charged with providing clarity to the significance of a sacrament, whereas the significance of nonverbal signs is passively determined by the words.[4] Second, by upholding the immutable "essential sense" of a word, Aquinas fails to acknowledge the relational nature of signs. The notion that there is a universal essential sense undergirding every formulation of a sacrament's form fails to acknowledge the reciprocally formal relationship of language and mental concept (i.e., of sign and signified). Put differently, Aquinas fails to acknowledge the importance of a sign's context.

While Aquinas's sacramental minimalism is clearly influenced by medieval liturgy as he knew it, as well as by the tendency toward reduction that marks the genre of the *Summa Theologiae*, I argue that his preoccupation with words also bears responsibility for limiting the range of data he considers when constructing his sacramental theology. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, in his consideration of the Eucharist, Aquinas's treatment of nonverbal signs is largely limited to those signs immediately related to the dominical words of consecration. Hence, bread, wine, and the minister all receive

[2] S.T. III.60.7.ad1.
[3] S.T. I.85.2.ad3.
[4] Cf. S.T. III.60.7c.

extensive consideration that pertains largely to their relationship to the words of consecration. One might speculate that if Aquinas had a more robust understanding of signification, he would be more likely to include the other aspects of eucharistic celebrations in his considerations. For example, rather than focusing narrowly on the dominical words of consecration, he might offer a more prolonged treatment of the entirety of the eucharistic prayer.

For the remainder of this chapter I use the term "liturgical theology" to denote a tendency toward sacramental *maximalism* that is preoccupied with all aspects of ritual action. This is juxtaposed to Aquinas's sacramental minimalism wherein he tends to reduce his considerations to what is deemed essential to the sacrament. To be clear, Aquinas's sacramental *minimalism* does not mean that he sees no value in what is nonessential. On the contrary, Aquinas has what one might call liturgical instincts. By "liturgical instincts" I mean that Aquinas acknowledges the significance of those religious operations that he would not consider necessary for the completion of the sacrament. Despite his emphasis on words, he clearly has a tendency toward a liturgical theology that has a place for nonverbal signs.

For example, when treating the external acts of religion, Aquinas considers the usefulness of music and chanting. Here, he uses a telling phrase: "It is evident that the human soul is moved in various ways according to various melodies of sound. . . . Hence the use of music in divine praises is a salutary institution."[5] As we saw in chapters 2 and 3, Aquinas emphasizes the mediation of revelation through words (i.e., the symbol of faith) when he discusses the mind's movement toward the Final End by means of knowing and loving God. In this treatment of music, however, there is an awareness of "various ways" that this movement might occur. In fact, Aquinas says that the words being sung do not need to be understood. "The same applies to the hearers, for even if some of them understand not what is sung, yet they understand why it is sung, namely, for God's glory: and this is enough to arouse their devotion."[6] In the preceding passage we begin to see Aquinas move away from his insistence on the need for verbal signification. Aquinas goes on to assert, however, that "to arouse men to devotion by teaching and preaching is a more excellent

[5] S.T. II.II.91.2c.

[6] S.T. II.II.91.2.ad5.

way than by singing."[7] While he is clinging to the supremacy of words, Aquinas is willing to affirm the efficacy of nonverbal signification. He is wrestling with a tension.

In order to examine an example where nonverbal signs are elevated past their passive role, I turn to Aquinas's treatment of sacramental eating. The way Aquinas speaks of the communal act of physically consuming the consecrated bread and wine offers us insight, not only into the significance of nonverbal signs, but also into the moral weight such signification carries. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, Aquinas is primarily concerned with spiritual eating. This concern stems from his understanding of the purpose of the Eucharist: to nourish the Church's spiritual life. Hence, Aquinas focuses on the role of the theological virtues in the Eucharist to the extent that he is able to deny the need for sacramental eating. This does not mean, however, that sacramental eating (or restricting such eating) should be taken lightly. In fact, Aquinas clearly says that spiritual eating with actual reception is better than spiritual eating without reception.[8] For Aquinas, physically eating the consecrated host and drinking the consecrated wine is a significant action.

First, sacramental eating is a sign of incorporation in Christ's ecclesial body. "Whoever receives this sacrament, expresses [*significat*] thereby that he is made one with Christ, and incorporated in His members."[9] Hence, the choice to eat and drink of the Eucharist is a choice to communicate a relationship to those who witness that eating. Put differently, a communion line is a community embodying its fellowship. Through sacramental eating, spiritual eating is done communally. As nonverbal signs, eating and drinking are significant actions that, like music, are capable of moving our minds toward knowledge and love of God.

Second, sacramental eating can be an expression of a reality that is not present. Just as a communion line embodies fellowship, a body excluded from a communion line embodies a lack of fellowship. Therefore, excluding oneself or another person from the Eucharist is

[7] S.T. II.II.91.2.ad3.

[8] Cf. S.T. III.80.1.ad3.

[9] S.T. III.80.4c. It is worth noting that, while Aquinas calls the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ the *res tantum* (i.e., the reality not signified), throughout all of question 80 he is considering how this *res tantum* is signified in the celebration of the Eucharist.

an act of religion that signifies a reality. Because sacramental eating is not merely eating a sign but is itself a sign, there are moral dimensions to be considered. Hence, Aquinas says that those who are not justified (i.e., who are not subjects of charity) yet choose to partake of the Eucharist choose to embody a deceptive sign. "Whoever receives this sacrament while in mortal sin [i.e., while lacking all charity] is guilty of lying to this sacrament, and consequently of sacrilege, because he profanes the sacrament: and therefore he sins mortally."[10] The point I want to emphasize is that the nonverbal sign of sacramental eating is an act of religion that is deeply significant.

I forward these few examples as evidence of an inclination, albeit slight, toward liturgical theology in Aquinas's sacramental theology. The sacramental minimalism of Aquinas does not completely stop him from attending to the significance of the nonverbal liturgical actions of the Church. Nevertheless, Aquinas remains a sacramental minimalist. These few examples of Aquinas's liturgical instincts ought not be used to distract us from the self-defeating sacramental minimalism that undeniably marks the *Tertia Pars*. Hence, I now turn to the construction of a liturgical theology of right religion that, by magnifying Aquinas's liturgical instincts, will help us to avoid the minimalism and individualism that mark the *Tertia Pars* but that are so absent in the *Secunda Pars*'s grammars of grace and virtue.

II. Goodness and Rightness

In his work, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's* Summa Theologiae, James F. Keenan makes a distinction between moral operations that are good and those that are right. Specifically, he argues that Aquinas has two ways of evaluating moral actions:

> The distinction between goodness and rightness could be stated in this form: goodness measures whether out of love one *strives to attain* a rightly ordered self. Charity, for Thomas, is this measure. Rightness, on the other hand, measures whether one *actually attains* a rightly ordered self. Thus, the order of reason determines whether proximate ends and means attain the mean.[11]

[10] S.T. III.80.4c.

[11] James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's* Summa Theologiae (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 137–38.

For an act to be called right, it must attain the mean. Recalling our previous treatment of moral virtue in chapter 4, attaining the mean is a result of prudence determining an end, of temperance and fortitude controlling the inhibitory effects of the passions, and justice moving the will to actually choose the end determined by prudence.[12] When prudence is properly formed (i.e., supported by temperance and fortitude), it is able to accurately determine the mean of a virtue, providing the end to the will. Insofar as this prudent end is chosen by the will, the consequent operation is a right act. Or, in Keenan's words, an operation is right when it is the operation of a "rightly ordered self."

Of course, prudence regularly errs when providing proximate ends to the will. Insofar as an operation is the result of a disordered self, that external act is called "wrong." Wrongness does not, however, necessarily imply badness. Rather, as Keenan points out, "badness is not deliberately willing the wrong, but failing to strive for the right, i.e. [failing] to grow in virtue."[13] As we saw above, this "striving for the right" is the measure of goodness. Hence, even when prudence misses the mean, that does not imply a failure on the will's part. One can be wrong while still being good. But what does it mean to *strive* for rightness?

Simply put, when we act *ex caritate*, our acts are morally good. Insofar as charity is a union with God that seeks greater union, it can also be described in terms of striving for rightness. Hence, when a person acts out of love for God so that they might more deeply love God, that person acts in a good way. In the end, we have two ways of evaluating moral acts: "External acts must be measured both as *ex caritate* and as fitting to reason. Measuring the same act with two distinct measurements is, as far as [Keenan] can see, the distinction between goodness and rightness."[14]

"Thomas argues that in all external activity there are two measures. Therefore, as every act bears two descriptions, the distinction between goodness and rightness is not between person and act, but between the heart and reason."[15] This striving is "antecedent to questions concerning intention and choice, or to questions pertaining to proximate

[12] Cf. chap. 4.I.1.
[13] Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 139.
[14] Ibid., 131.
[15] Ibid., 143.

ends intended and the actual objects realized."[16] In other words, while goodness does require specific choice and intention, the specific shape of the action (i.e., *what* is chosen and *what* is intended) is a matter of rightness, not goodness.

Ordered reason is required for being a morally good person who operates rightly. In the fourth chapter, I argued that operating *ex caritate* constituted a person's ability to reflect divinity to others.[17] Hence, while goodness may be an authentic form of *theosis*, rightness perfects this reflective potential of a moral operation because it brings the operation's specification into consideration. Disembodied charity never provokes anyone. Rightly embodied charity is, however, a better provocation than charity embodied through a disordered reason. When we see a person do the wrong thing, we can still acknowledge that they were trying. Their striving in a difficult situation can still be a reflection of divinity despite their disorder. In their goodness, we have an example of striving that inspires our own goodness. On the other hand, when we see a person do the right thing in the face of adversity, their reflection of divinity provides more than an example of striving. Their rightness provides an example of embodied virtue that ought to be emulated. In other words, the person who is right *and* good reflects what divinity *ought* to look like when incarnated in the graced life of a human being.

III. Religious Signification

Before we begin a consideration of right and wrong religion, I want to discuss how the virtue of religion relates to sacramental signification. I briefly touched on this topic in chapter 5, but I revisit it here to add depth to the previous discussion.[18] While, there are many external acts of religion, here I am interested in the Sacraments of the New Law. Specifically, I will highlight what it means to say that the sacraments are the result of our obligation to signify the salvation of the world.

Because religion is a moral virtue annexed to justice, it implies obligation (i.e., giving what is due). Specifically, religion is the virtue

[16] Ibid., 142.
[17] Cf. chap. 4.II.
[18] Cf. chap. 5.II.1.

by which we are obliged to give God worship from our devotion.[19] In the celebration of the sacraments, the virtue of religion elicits communal action in order to offer God praise. According to Aquinas, however, the sacraments need to offer signs of the cause, form, and end of our salvation.

> A sacrament properly speaking is that which is ordained to signify our sanctification. In which three things may be considered; viz. the very cause of our sanctification, which is Christ's passion; the form of our sanctification, which is grace and the virtues; and the ultimate end of our sanctification, which is eternal life. And all these are signified by the sacraments. Consequently a sacrament is a sign that is both a reminder of the past, i.e. the passion of Christ; and an indication of that which is effected in us by Christ's passion, i.e. grace; and a prognostic, that is, a foretelling of future glory.[20]

Throughout chapter 5, I emphasized what it means to say that the sacraments signify "the very cause of our sanctification, which is Christ's passion." For our current purposes, I draw attention to how the sacraments signify the form of our sanctification, that is, grace and the virtues. Because the sacraments are operations of religion, we are obligated to signify the virtues through which God's grace is manifested. We are charged with showing the world how to live as Christ lived.

Recalling the codependence of the virtues, it is not possible to signify charity without signifying a moral virtue. Hence, we are obliged to sacramentally signify the perfecting virtues (i.e., the moral virtues formed by charity) through which we are said to participate in the Divine Nature. By this sacramental signification, we fulfill our obligation to signify the virtues and the grace that constitute the form of our sanctification. I emphasize, however, the fact that there is no universal form of our salvation. While it is tempting to point to faith or charity as the form of salvation, there is no isolating the theological virtues from one another, and there is no isolating the moral virtues from the theological virtues.[21] Hence, if they are obligated to signify

[19] Cf. S.T. II.II.81.2-4.
[20] S.T. III.60.3c.
[21] Cf. chap. 4.II.

the form of our sanctification, then the sacraments must signify all of these virtues. For example, if the Eucharist is meant to signify charity, it must do so by signifying the perfecting virtues through which charity is embodied.

The sacraments, then, are communal operations of religious signification wherein the Church uses signs to provide knowledge of the way we are called to live like Christ. As Aquinas points out, this religious signification is our obligation because human beings need help:

> Yet such is the weakness of the human mind that it needs a guiding hand, not only to the knowledge, but also to the love of Divine things by means of certain sensible objects known to us. Chief among these is the humanity of Christ, according to the words of the [Preface for Christmastide], "that through knowing God visibly, we may be caught up to the love of things invisible." Wherefore matters relating to Christ's humanity are the chief incentive to devotion, leading us thither as a guiding hand, although devotion itself has for its object matters concerning the Godhead.[22]

Through the sacraments we signify the virtues that allow us to live as Christ lived, thereby moving on the way toward our Final End. Christ's provocation is the possibility of our *theosis*. Because the virtue of religion is a moral virtue, however, the specification of its operations requires prudence. Put differently, determining precisely *how* to carry out this provocative religious signification is a matter of right reason commanding religion.

IV. Right Religion

In this section, I assume the goodness of religious operation. That is to say, in the considerations that follow, all operations of religion are assumed to be carried out *ex caritate*. This is not meant to imply that all operations of religion actually are formed by charity. As a moral virtue, religion is perfectly capable of operating without charity. It is not hard to imagine religious action done for nefarious reasons that contradict friendship with God. Those particular acts of

[22] S.T. II.II.82.3.ad2.

religion, however, are not considered here. Rather, good religion (i.e., religion done *ex caritate*) seeks to serve the union with God that is both religion's occasion and purpose. The fact that good religion is done *ex caritate* means that all such operations are the result of the Holy Spirit's prior movement within the members of the religious community. But we must ask, what does it mean to say that the Holy Spirit uses right reason as an instrument to increase charity? How does right reason help the religious signification of our salvation?

1. Religious Prudence

If prudence is right reason about things to be done, then religious prudence is right reason about worship to be given to God. In terms of sacramental signification, religious prudence is right reason about sacramental signs to be embodied. Hence, religion that follows the command of right reason results in an operation of right religion. As I pointed out in chapter 4, prudence is tasked with attending to particular context (i.e., the various circumstances of our lives) so as to accurately determine the proximate end to be willed and the mean of the virtues needed to achieve that end.[23] Religious prudence, then, is tasked with attending to the various circumstances of the worshiping community so as to accurately determine the form of sacramental signification to be embodied. Put simply, religious prudence must determine the form of the sacraments by scrutinizing the particular context of the religious act.

For example, when a pastor with religious prudence sets out to write a sermon, she will take stock of the particular audience that will hear the sermon. The pastor will take into account the congregation's temporal location (e.g., Easter, Advent, etc.), their geographic location (e.g., vernacular language), and their cultural location (e.g., education level, current events, etc.). On the other hand, a pastor lacking religious prudence will write the sermon for the congregation she wishes she had, giving no consideration to their particularity. We will return to our imprudent pastor shortly; for now let me stress that religious prudence seeks to celebrate sacraments that embody *effective* (that is to say, truly provocative) signs of God's love.

[23] Cf. chap. 4.I.1.1.

When utilizing this notion of right religion to consider the formation of sacraments, it must be emphasized that prudent evaluation of the community's needs and capabilities is paramount. If the sacraments are to fruitfully signify the form of our sanctification, then religious prudence must take the worshiping community into account. Every community has different potential. As sacramental writers, different congregations may have different liturgical abilities. Some communities may be more capable of a prolonged liturgy that utilizes lengthy musical pieces and learned sermons. Another congregation may be capable of celebrating multilingual liturgies as a way of providing for a culturally diverse community. As sacramental readers, different congregations need to hear different messages (i.e., read different signs). Some communities may need to hear a message that emphasizes justice. Other communities (e.g., elementary schools) may need simplified messages. All of these various capabilities are the concern of the religiously prudent person. The words, postures, timing, gestures, materials, art, and architecture that constitute our religious actions should be determined by religious prudence in order to yield operations of right religion that in turn yield communities that reflect divinity.

Bearing in mind that sacraments exist to signify the virtues through which Christians manifest grace, right religion must elicit sacraments that properly signify the *particular* form of the *particular* community's salvation. Simply put, it is necessary to prudently determine which moral virtues to emphasize through our sacramental signification so as to properly signify the embodied charity that is most needed in that community. In other words, our sacraments must show us how to live in the way that will allow the Church to fall more deeply in love with God.

2. Striving for Right Religion

What happens, then, when a religious community and its leaders lack religious prudence? To answer this question, I first turn to Aquinas's treatment of superstition. In discussing the vices against religion, Aquinas speaks about superstitious observances:

> Now the end of divine worship is that man may give glory to God, and submit to Him in mind and body. Consequently, what-

> ever a man may do conducing to God's glory, and subjecting his mind to God, and his body, too, by a moderate curbing of the concupiscences, is not excessive in the divine worship, provided it be in accordance with the commandments of God and of the Church, and in keeping with the customs of those among whom he lives. On the other hand if that which is done be, in itself, not conducive to God's glory, nor raise man's mind to God, nor curb inordinate concupiscence, or again if it be not in accordance with the commandments of God and of the Church, or if it be contrary to the general custom—which, according to Augustine [Ad Casulan. Ep. xxxvi], "has the force of law"—all this must be reckoned excessive and superstitious, because consisting, as it does, of mere externals, it has no connection with the internal worship of God.[24]

Here, I would like to draw attention to the fact that acts of religion are to be carried out "in keeping with the customs of those among whom [the worshiper] lives." Without projecting our theory of religious prudence and right religion onto Aquinas, it is clear that the particular modes of religious operations are intimately connected to contingent cultural location.

Aquinas is clear, however, that the mode of worship can fail to conform to local custom while still being an act of devotion to God.

> Accordingly the species of superstition are differentiated, first on the part of the mode, secondly on the part of the object. For the divine worship may be given either to whom it ought to be given, namely, to the true God, but "in an undue mode," and this is the first species of superstition.[25]

It is possible to worship God in an undue manner while still worshiping God. Again, it is not my desire to anachronistically project a concern for cultural plurality back onto Aquinas. Rather, I refer to these passages for two reasons. First, for Aquinas, the mode of worship given to God is influenced by the particularity of the worshiping community. Second, worshiping the true God out of devotion and for the purpose of deepening that devotion does not suffice for a

[24] S.T. II.II.93.2c.
[25] S.T. II.II.92.2c.

nonvicious operation of religion. I highlight these two points because it helps cast a light on the moral quality of worship. That is to say, worship requires that prudence dictate its mode by assessing the various circumstances of the particular context. In worship, as with all acts of human virtue, the moral virtues cannot be isolated. An operation of right religion is always the fruit of prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice, faith, hope, and charity.[26]

Reverting to our terms, it is possible have *good* acts of religion that seek to foment charity but that do not meet the criteria for *right* religion. How, then, are we to distinguish between acts of religion that are good but wrong and those acts that are good and right? By examining the relationship between the religious operation and its particular context it is possible to determine the degree to which religious prudence was involved in that act of religion. If cultural context had no influence on the form of the sacrament, then religious prudence was not involved in that act of religion. For example, if a community is being regularly oppressed through violent racism, it is imprudent to celebrate a liturgy that emphasizes the virtues of obedience and humility while ignoring the community's need for fortitude and justice. While such acts of religion fail to signify the form of sanctification that is needed by the community, that does not mean that the act was not good, nor does it mean that the act cannot be efficacious.

When acts of religion fail to conform to reason, but nonetheless are done out of charity, we have what I call a good act of wrong religion. On the surface, this good act fails to reflect divinity as sacramental signs are intended (i.e., by providing knowledge of the virtues through which a community responds to God's love). If, however, a community is aware of the charitable motivation of the religious act, then that act can still be recognized as the work of the Holy Spirit. As I said above, those who strive and fail still inspire others to strive.

It is an all too common occurrence to see one religious community belittling the liturgical practices of another community. Particularly when it comes to ecumenical relations, liturgical norms are often the occasion for denigration. Roman Catholics have a tendency to proclaim (in a deeply erroneous way) that Protestants do not believe in

[26] Again, I am assuming the presence of charity. It is possible to have an imperfect act of right religion that lacks charity.

the real presence of Christ. Similarly, Roman Catholics are often accused of Pelagianism as a result of their sacramental practices. Even within Roman Catholic communities it is not uncommon to hear someone bemoan the use of guitar music in postconciliar "folk Masses," or to see people roll their eyes at the use of chant during a Mass. If a bishop chooses to wear pontifical gloves and a *cappa magna*, one can expect to hear derisive laughter (usually occurring somewhere behind his back). If a bishop chooses to wash the feet of a woman during a Holy Thursday Mass, that bishop's competence will often be questioned publically and impatiently. These examples are a few unfortunate drops in a bucket filled with the crimes of the so-called Liturgy Wars. Clearly, it is crucial to engage in ongoing discussion regarding liturgical practice; that is the main point of the current chapter. But it is crucial to begin these discussions with an affirmation of the goodness of these liturgical practices. This affirmation will go a long way to ensuring that discussions about liturgy are carried out as charitable conversations and not vitriolic arguments. Acknowledging and affirming the goodness of religious action that is wrong/imprudent/superstitious is essential to the spiritual life of the Church. When we affirm the goodness of wrong religion, we affirm our community's status as a *pilgrim* community that perpetually strives to grow in religious perfection.

A group of good Christians does not, however, suffice for a salvifically efficacious ecclesial body of Christ. Moral rightness is also necessary. Insofar as a worshiping community continually lacks religious prudence when determining the shape of religious acts, that community fails (if not completely) to reflect divinity to the world. In the fifth chapter, I said that the Church's unity is a function of its ability to reflect divinity to the world.[27] Hence, wrong religion, even when done *ex caritate*, hinders the Church's ability to grow in unity as the ecclesial body of Christ.

To conclude this consideration of right religion, I want to emphasize a point that is often too obvious to be noticed: right and wrong are not exclusive categories. Rather, they are the idealized poles of a sliding scale. Just as there are no acts of authority that avoid violence, there are no liturgies that avoid idolatrous superstition. This is why

[27] Cf. chap. 5.III.3.

Keenan's notion of striving is so important. Striving implies affirming our obligation to seek perfection while recognizing an inability to avoid imperfection.

Striving for right religion, then, is a process of perpetual liturgical reform. It is a *perpetual* process, because careful attention must be given to the ever-changing context of each unique sacramental celebration. Because the spiritual life of the Church is a community's dynamic pilgrimage toward God, the sacraments must serve that pilgrim Church in all its various circumstances and particular imperfections. Beginners in charity need food, but not all hunger is the same. I began this section by asking what it means to say that the Holy Spirit uses right reason as an instrument to increase charity. Through the cooperation of the Church's sacraments, the Holy Spirit signifies the form of our sanctification, teaching us how to deepen our friendship with God. Through the use of religious prudence, however, that provocative lesson is personalized for our time and place.

V. Writing a Diverse Christ for a Plural World

In this final section, I will show that a liturgical theology of right religion allows the Church to attend to the sacraments as moral obligations that require ongoing reform if they are to be effective in the spiritual life of the Church. To this end, I will first briefly describe what it means to say that Christ is present in a eucharistic act of right religion. Here, I will emphasize the fact that the eucharistic presence of Christ is a diverse reality. Then, by way of illustration, I will briefly gesture toward ways this liturgical theology of right religion might be applied to the Eucharist.

1. Prudently Writing Christ

In the fifth chapter, I described the sacraments as rituals that signify the charity of Christ in a way that provokes the Church into participating in that charity.[28] The Eucharist was described as signifying Christ's charity as food that perfects our imperfect charity by turning us into Christ. In this section, I want to answer the following ques-

[28] Cf. chap. 5.I.1.

tion: Into which Christ are eucharistic eaters transformed? I suggest that religious prudence dictates how Christ is represented and, therefore, dictates the Christ into which the worshipers are formed. If the community is formed into the Christ that lives the way Jesus Christ would have lived *for that community's time and place*, then that eucharistic celebration was an act of right religion.

The Eucharist signifies Christ's provocative life so that we might be provoked into discipleship. Insofar as the Eucharist is a representation (i.e., a sign) of Christ's sacrificial life, the way in which that representation occurs will dictate the way in which our charity is provoked. When we look at Jesus' sacrifice as the cause of our justification, we are looking at an act of charity that provokes our charity by which sins are remitted. Like our charity, however, Jesus' acts of charity are visible because they are embodied through moral virtue. Hence, the particular moral virtues that are emphasized in our christologies and soteriologies greatly impact the way the Eucharist will signify Christ and, therefore, greatly impact the transformation of the ecclesial body's unity.

For example, if Jesus' cross is an act of solidarity with the oppressed, then that act of charity provokes our charitable solidarity by which we seek to serve those who are marginalized. Similarly, if Jesus' cross is an act of obedience, then that act of charity provokes our charitable obedience by which we seek to curb our passions. Of course, Christ's cross is both of these and much more. The existence of multiple christologies and soteriologies allows the Paschal Mystery to speak to the various circumstances of a world deeply marked by plurality. At times we may need to hear and see Christ signified in one way and in another way at a different time. We recall that, through the sacraments and the faith that believes through them, Christ's Paschal Mystery is applied to the Church.[29] Hence, the way we signify Christ is the historical application of his passion as the cause of our salvation.

The sacramental signs we choose to embody are the mediation through which faith knows the God who loves us. Simultaneously, those signs are the mediation through which God calls us to participate in that love. Hence, by acts of right religion we come to actually know and love God. In light of this fact, the importance of religious

[29] Cf. chap. 5.II.

prudence cannot be overstated. The knowledge that the sacraments provide is the presence of Christ for a particular community. By signifying Christ's virtues in a way that is influenced by the particular needs of a community, that community is provoked into discipleship *of a particular form*. Hence, the form of their sanctification will differ from that of another community. In other words, the embodied *theosis* of one community is never identical to the *theosis* of another community. In this spiritual life, there is no universal form of salvation.

Religious prudence, then, is tasked with determining how Christ will be written in the Eucharist. Striving for right religion means patiently determining the eucharistic signs that will embody the eucharistic body of Christ.[30] Hence, the Real Presence of Christ is not always the same. In fact, the opposite is true. The eucharistic body of Christ is different in every writing of the Eucharist. When the Eucharist is an act of striving for right religion, Christ is present for that particular community's needs. This point becomes less controversial when we think about how Jesus related to those he loved. Each person came to Jesus with particular needs and those needs dictated the Christ they met. For example, Jesus treated tax collectors differently than he treated religious leaders. He treated lepers differently than he treated merchants in the temple. Jesus' prudence dictated the unique manner by which he was present to each person. Likewise, the religious prudence of worshipers needs to dictate the unique manner that Christ is present for the community that longs to become Christ. The sacraments need to show us how to be Christ *for our time and place*. In short, right religion seeks to write a diverse Christ for a plural world. Through right religion, the provocative invitation to God's friendship is personalized. Hence, in the Eucharist, we are able to meet Christ as the One who listens to our own needs and walks with us as a friend.

2. How Do We Write Christ?

What we have, then, is a way of seeing liturgical action that needs to attend to its context to appropriately communicate the necessary virtues. This approach to liturgical reform celebrates plurality. There

[30] Cf. chap. 5.III.1.

is no end to the variety of liturgical forms that can be utilized. Hence, this liturgical theology of right religion is best understood as a method for understanding and reforming worship. For the remainder of this section, I will offer a few examples of how this method might be applied to eucharistic celebrations.

First, and perhaps most obvious, is our previous example of preaching. Sermons are vitally important liturgical signs that allow the eucharistic body of Christ to speak. Recalling our past treatment of the degrees of charity, the "various circumstances" of our lives may render us beginners in desperate need of temperance or fortitude. When a community tragedy occurs, it is necessary to reform that day's liturgy to address the particular needs of the community. A prudent preacher will ask if the community's anger has grown into hateful desire for retribution or if their sadness has developed into despair. Beyond preaching, these needs can also be addressed in the prayers of the faithful and music selection. To ignore these particular needs out of fear of backlash from parishioners or superiors would be to fail in right religion and, therefore, hinder that community's ability to be the united ecclesial body of Christ.

Beyond the rapidly changing daily issues of sermons, music, and prayers, we can also apply a liturgical theology of right religion to nonverbal signs of the liturgy that tend to change less often. For example, during the eucharistic prayer, the congregation will embody certain postures. Depending on cultural location, this posture is usually standing or kneeling. It is often the case that some members of a congregation will stand while some are kneeling. The point I emphasize is that these postures help write the eucharistic presence of Christ. Religious prudence must take into account this difference in signification and work to determine which posture is most appropriate for that congregation. Should the congregation emphasize kneeling as a way to signify solemnity and reverence to Christ? Should the congregation emphasize standing as a way to signify joyful hope and respect for Christ? Should the congregation emphasize maintaining a collective posture (i.e., discouraging some from kneeling while others stand and *vice versa*) whereby the entire congregation signifies a Christ who is present to a community as opposed to a divided group of individuals? When and for what reasons should these postures be changed? All of these postures are uniquely significant and deserve the consideration of religious prudence so that the congregation

might continue striving toward the right religion through which God speaks in a unique way.

This being a discussion of the Eucharist, I would be remiss to not spend some time discussing how bread is used in liturgies. For example, in contemporary Roman Catholic eucharistic celebrations, we tend to use mass-produced communion wafers. Religious prudence needs to attend to the *significant* difference between these edible discs and bread. If a communion wafer is placed in front of random human beings, asking them to name what they saw, it would be a rare occasion to hear a response of "bread." Rather, responses would range from the specific "communion wafer" to a "cracker." The point is, the communion wafer is not recognizable as bread. Hence, our contemporary eucharistic celebrations have substituted bread with a sign for bread.

Without going into a superfluous consideration of why this substitution has occurred, I want to highlight the loss of significance that results when food is no longer used as a eucharistic sign to write Christ. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus did not take "something made out of water and wheat." He took bread. If the Church desires to write a Christ who is spiritual food, then, as Aquinas emphasizes, the use of food is necessary for such signification.[31] Using actual food as a sign to write Christ helps to write a Christ that is a source of nourishment. In other words, if a community needs to learn that God is the source of their life, then actual food speaks that truth more effectively than individual communion wafers. If a community needs humility, then using food to signify their relationship to God may be a more effective act of religion.[32]

Beyond the significance of using actual food, the shape of the food that is eaten is significant and deserving of consideration. If, as Aquinas points out, the Eucharist is meant to signify our unity as a community, then eating a fragment of a whole loaf that was blessed and broken is a different sign from eating a communion wafer that was consecrated at an earlier Mass and retrieved from a tabernacle. When members of a congregation eat unique fragments of a single

[31] Cf. chap. 5.III.1.

[32] Obviously, this is not meant to imply that a lack of food renders the Eucharist ineffective. Communion wafers are signs that undeniably write the eucharistic body of Christ.

loaf, God is speaking to them about who they are as a community. In short, eating broken bread signifies solidarity and responsibility to one another. Deciding to celebrate the Eucharist this way is an act of religious prudence that is seeking to signify the Christ who calls us as a united community.

The significance of the food's shape becomes most crucial when taking Communion to those who were absent from the liturgy. Opening a gilded pyx to reveal a perfectly whole circle that we have agreed to call "bread" is not the same as offering a chunk of food that was clearly part of a whole but has been broken for those who are not at the altar. That fragment of bread, eaten in a nursing home room, is the liturgical undoing of the communicant's spatial and temporal absence and the affirmation of her unity in Christ. To argue that it is not the bread or its shape that causes unity but rather the substance of Christ that underlies the inconsequential accidents is to fundamentally misunderstand sacramental signification and therefore the sacraments. Religious prudence knows that sacramental signification writes Christ. Hence, the prudent pastor seeks to *effectively* write Christ in the Eucharist.

Finally, beyond the shape of the food that is eaten, there are significant differences in the way that food is eaten. While Aquinas is clear that we eat the Eucharist spiritually through faith, sacramental eating is a sign that helps write the Christ who is spiritually eaten. There are many ways to eat this sacrament: while kneeling, while standing, on the tongue, in the hand, from an extraordinary eucharistic minister, from an ordinary eucharistic minister, etc. Religious prudence seeks to understand the difference in these signs and put them to the service of the community. For example, receiving the Eucharist on one's tongue is a particularly powerful sign of humility. Depending on the culture and the individual communicant, being passively fed can provide an experience of God's operation in our lives. Put differently, this way of eating can signify temperance and humility. On the other hand, using one's own hands to bring the food to our mouths can provide an experience of responsibility and cooperation. This way of eating can be a sign of fortitude and justice. The prudent worshipers will scrutinize their needs and embody the signs that provocatively teach them who they are called to be.

From all these considerations of applying religious prudence, one important point comes to the fore. It is not possible to prudently form

a liturgy without intimate knowledge of the particular worshiping community. Any system of liturgical reform that creates space between the reformers and the worshiping community is doomed to fail. Religious prudence knows that it must attend to the various circumstances of the particular community. Hence, using the principle of subsidiarity, the prudent pastor (especially the pastors who find themselves either moving from one community to another or overtasked with administrative duties) will be sure to appoint committees of liturgists and worship planners who can carry out the perpetual liturgical reform that every community needs and deserves. Knowing one lacks the ability to prudently form worship is itself an act of religious prudence that serves right religion.

As I said above, we are called to the sacraments so that we might continue to be called through the sacraments.[33] In the end, a liturgical theology of right religion asserts that, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, we must choose what the unity of the Church will look like by choosing the Christ we will write in the Eucharist. This religious action is not accomplished by simply repeating the actions of Christ at the Last Supper. Jesus celebrated the Last Supper the way he did because of his particular context. He was a Jew observing the Passover with other Jews in a time of political upheaval and uncertainty. If we are called to simply mimic Jesus, we have been failing for two thousand years. Rather, by proclaiming Christ through diverse signs that reach out to a world marked by plurality, the Church does what Jesus did: make God present as the One who comes to meet the needs of those God loves.

[33] Cf. chap. 5.II.3.

CONCLUSION

Speaking with a Lost Voice

Throughout this book, I have retrieved grammars of grace and virtue as a means to facilitate contemporary discussion about eucharistic theology. The preceding liturgical theology of right religion is rooted in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. The grammars of grace and virtue out of which Aquinas beautifully articulates his vision of the embodied spiritual life have, here, been put to use in articulating a vision of how the liturgical worship of Christian communities serves their embodied spiritual life. In essence, I have tried to integrate his grammars of grace and virtue into a sacramental theology that maintains the ecclesial concerns of the *Secunda Pars*. This liturgical theology of right religion should not be taken simply as interpretation of Aquinas's sacramental theology. I have used Aquinas's grammars in a way that has clearly changed his voice. In the previous chapter, more than anywhere else in this book, I used Aquinas's voice in a way that seeks to make it my own. Recalling the phrasing I used in the introduction, in constructing a liturgical theology of right religion, I am speaking with a lost voice in a way that addresses contemporary concerns.

What I have done throughout this book is try to use Aquinas's grammars of grace and virtue in a similar way to how Henri de Lubac and other *ressourcement* theologians sought to use the theology of patristic authors.[1] I am not trying to absolutize Aquinas's grammars

[1] Cf. introduction.IV.

of grace and virtue, nor am I implying that a liturgical theology of right religion is how Aquinas himself would use them. I do believe, however, that using the grammars of virtue and grace in this way allows us to have conversations that simultaneously seek to be grounded in Tradition while honestly addressing contemporary contexts and the questions they generate. In the end, I am seeking to provide a way of speaking that should be used when it is helpful and curbed when it is not.

Throughout this book, I have emphasized the importance of rightly writing the sacraments so that the Church might live the spiritual life of friendship with God as a pilgrim community. In choosing this emphasis, I risked burdening the Church and its human weaknesses with an impossible task. Cooperating with God is difficult. So I wish to close with this assurance: the beauty of sacramental signification (and all cooperation with God) is that it need not be understood as such in order to function successfully. In fact, the majority of Catholic Christians tend to understand the sacraments in a way that is reminiscent of ancient magic (i.e., moving earthly elements and speaking the correct words will provoke divine intervention). We tend to think we are provoking God when the exact opposite is true. It is God who provokes us. As daunting as cooperation may be, it is God who is operating, and a merciful God at that. Despite our misunderstandings of the sacraments (and there are no doubt some examples in the preceding pages), God will continue to cooperate with human beings as images of divinity that are made to reflect the love of God into all of Creation.

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